BING

WINTER 2019
No. 183

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club – as recognised by the **Guinness Book of World Records**

Our Mission:

To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

Membership

Membership renewals fall due on 1st January each year and subscription rates effective for 2020 are:

USA and Canada	**US $35 or C$45 per annum**
UK	**£20 per annum**
Mainland Europe, including Eire	**£23 per annum**
Australia and New Zealand	**A$50 per annum**
Rest of the World	**£24 per annum**

All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to **The International Club Crosby** with the exception of:

(a) American members who should pay Perry Huntoon in US dollars

(b) Canadian members who should pay Scott Payne in US or Canadian dollars

(c) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Websites

Club: www.club-crosby.org
BING Magazine: www.bingmagazine.co.uk
Bing Crosby Enterprises: www.BingCrosby.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326
Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Club_Crosby

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or to the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

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Editorial

It is with great sadness that I have to advise you that Wig Wiggins passed away on October 29. Michael has more information in the column he had written before we received the late news of Wig's passing, which only arrived whilst the magazine was being printed.

After this very sad opening to my Editorial, I am however very pleased to report that a new album of Bing with the London Symphony Orchestra was issued on November 22. It's called Bing at Christmas – details in "Keeping Track".

The reactions to the appearance of the last magazine were very favourable indeed and we have to thank Debbie Sleith at Printdesigns for her imaginative reworking of the basic and simple material I supplied to her. It gives the magazine a much more professional layout.

Michael Crampton has the results of the recent survey about the magazine's future and there is good news in the short term as we can continue with three issues next year albeit of 48 pages each instead of 56.

This issue has an interesting mix of articles, ranging from David Lobosco's review of *Little Boy Lost* to Jeremy Rose's investigation of the "How the West Was Won" album and on to John Bassett's further discographical information. We welcome Frans van der Kolff who has been looking at The Charioteers' career and I have made some fresh discoveries about Bing's childhood in Spokane. There's news of a hitherto undiscovered recording and we also hear from the regulars Ken Crossland, Martin McQuade, Graham Pascoe, Lorne Harasen and Richard Baker. Also, I am delighted to say that Mark Scrimger is back in our pages after a long absence.

As we approach Christmas, Bing's voice is more in evidence in the media and in the shops. It's a lovely time of year for us Crosby supporters (as Bing liked to call us) and I wish you all the best for the festive season.

Malcolm Macfarlane *macwilmslo@aol.com*

I have always found that certain works of art are better enjoyed at specific moments of the year. That is why, for example, I like to re-read Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, *The Cricket on the Heart*, and the rest of his timeless Christmas stories every year when December rolls around. Something similar could be said of classic Yuletide-themed films such as It's a *Wonderful Life, Miracle on 34th Street,* and Bing's own *White Christmas*. Similarly, the soothing voices of the crooners sound even better and more soothing to me when the hot summer weather turns cooler and leaves begin to fall. The autumn and early winter have always been two of my favorite parts of the year, and whenever I think of these months I immediately envision myself sitting by a window near the fireplace, sipping on a cup of tea or coffee, and listening to classic old records. The afternoon is always rainy and cold outside, and Bing's warm baritone just fills the room and makes me feel cozy and safe inside. Quite the romantic, idealized picture, I know, but nonetheless true and recurrent every year in my household.

Though it is obvious that Bing's recorded legacy is richer and more varied than just his seasonal evergreens, it isn't less obvious that the public at large remembers him best for his Christmas recordings, which is why, as my fellow British Co-Editor rightly states, we hear more from and about him at the end of every year. That is because his versions of "White Christmas," "Silent Night," "I'll Be Home for Christmas," and "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas," to name but four, are the definitive ones, the yardstick with which to measure the value of the readings by other singers. They have acquired the status of timeless classics and will exist as long as Christmas is celebrated on any corner of the world. After all, it is no coincidence that Bing's voice has become known as "The Voice of Christmas."

And the fact that we get to hear his voice more often at the end of every year should also give us the chance to pause and think about how the preceding months have been. In terms of Crosby-related activities, 2019 hasn't been bad in the least: there have been new reissues, Dixie Lee Crosby has been deservedly honored in her hometown of Harriman, Tennessee, and the future of BING magazine and the ICC is financially viable at least for the short term. While we read the articles and sections contained in the ensuing pages, let us sit back, relax, and count our blessings instead of sheep, as Bing himself once taught us in song. Hopefully 2020 will be an even better year for all Crosby fans. In closing, I would like to thank all contributors for their excellent efforts for the magazine, and I wish all members all the best for the holiday season.

Anton Garcia-Fernandez *antongarciafdez@gmail.com*

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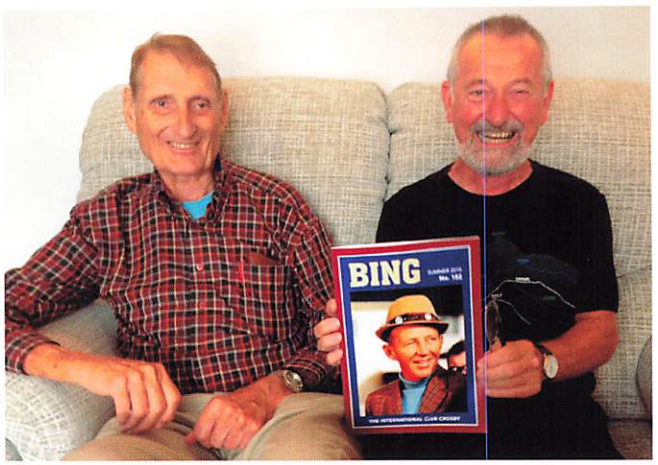
Secretary / Treasurer's Report

It is with considerable regret that I must begin my report by reporting that our esteemed US Representative Wig Wiggins has had to stand down from his duties due to ill health. Wig has suffered congestive heart failure for 15 years and latterly he has been very weakened by his condition.

Judy and I were in DC in late August and visited with Wig on a couple of occasions to find him frail but in good spirits. Wig felt that he could no longer give the service to members that they have enjoyed these past 29 years and asked that I make the arrangements to find a successor.

Happily, USA members will now be aware that Perry Huntoon has agreed to become US representative and all correspondence and enquiries should now be addressed to Perry whose address is on page 2.



Perry Huntoon (left) with Michael in September.

On a personal note I would like to thank Wig for his long term friendship and for the pleasure the Crampton family enjoyed when visiting with him and Laura to share their life for brief periods of time. Wig's contribution to Crosbyana is without parallel and his rich legacy includes his unstinting support for the Jonzo series of 51 CDs, his behind the scenes support for the Gonzaga and Hofstra conferences and his definitive discographies of Bing's commercial recordings. Not forgetting almost 30 years of dedicated duty to being the International Club Crosby's North American representative and all his excellent work in connection with the merger of the American and British clubs.

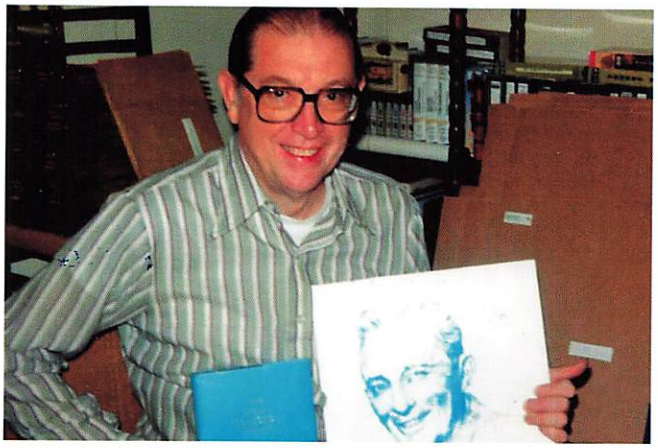
We salute you Wig.

Message from Wig To North American Members

As Michael has indicated above I have very reluctantly had to relinquish my role as your North American representative due to my failing health.

It has been a pleasure and privilege to serve you and I wanted most sincerely to thank all with whom I have associated these past 29 years. Your interest, support and friendship have been a great comport to me and I have a treasury of happy memories of the interactions I have enjoyed with so many dedicated members.

I am confident that the club has a great future and I would ask that you now extend a warm hand of welcome to Perry Huntoon to whom you should now address all queries and correspondence if you are a member in the United States. Scott Payne will continue to look after our Canadian members.



Wig at work on Crosby matters in the mid-1990s.

The Summer Insert – The Future Of The International Club Crosby

It is a pleasure to thank those members who took the time and trouble to respond to the options included in the insert. Many gave considerable thought to the future of the club and I share some of their comments with you below.

Members' responses fell broadly into two camps namely -

- In the UK keep 3 issues and increase the subs to cover, most agreeing that £30 would be a fair price to pay. The remaining members opting for 2 issues plus a mid-year supplement.
- In the US/Canada members were generally in favour of going to 2 issues and keeping the existing fees.

Clearly, it will be difficult to reconcile these two differing points of view but your management team will try to find ingenious ways to do so.

Some of the other suggestions that members asked to be considered were: -

1. an online version of the magazine
2. a 2 x 80 page magazine
3. reducing paper quality to save on postage
4. offer gift subscriptions for members children/ grandchildren
5. in addition to CDs make DVDs available of Bing's lesser known films
6. A5 format for the magazine
7. encourage local meetings
8. re-orientate the magazine to try and attract new younger members providing them with an A to Z of Bing's career within the magazine and making the magazine collectable.
9. reduce the number of pages in the magazine to save on postage.
10. for mainland Europe and Ireland, post the magazine to Europe in bulk and post onwards from there.

Item 9 is being implemented with effect from our next issue and we shall come down to 48 pages from 56. This will provide very useful savings on postage. Item 10 was the suggestion of German member Lars Schinnerling and has been adopted for this issue of the magazine. Despite this change, the ever increasing postage charges mean that we have to make a small increase of £1 in the subscriptions paid by our European and Republic of Ireland members. It is also necessary to increase the Rest of the World sub by £1 for the same reason.

Items 1 to 8 will be kept under review by your management team and we will initiate change when it is timely, sensible and practicable to do so.

Fortunately, the changes we have made will allow us to provide 3 issues of BING in 2020 and any further changes will be from 2021 onwards. Key to the continuing success of the ICC will be a healthy renewal rate combined with the generous support of many of our members. We will endeavour to maintain 3 issues for as long as possible and beyond that a move to 2 issues per year may become necessary.

New Members

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members with a sincere wish that they will derive much interest and enjoyment from their membership of the club.

UNITED STATES

Bill Clark (Sheffield Village, Ohio)

UNITED KINGDOM

David Kilmister (Stroud, Gloucestershire)

Donations

Members' generous support for the ICC continues and we are indebted to the members listed for their exceptional gifts without which three issues of BING would not be possible. Additionally I would like to apologise most sincerely to our Canadian members for missing their names in the last issue of BING.

CANADA

Scott Payne, Barry Birch, Alan Matheson, Britton Smith, Ben Weaver.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

George O'Reilly

UNITED KINGDOM

Ken Shaw, Nicholas Morrison, Miss J. Enno, Tom Wallace, Mervyn Jones (aged 99!)

UNITED STATES

Bob Philips

Deaths

Edward (Ted) J Laker (85), Gordon Delasalle, Barrie Newbold.

Ted Laker was a stalwart member of the British Bing Crosby Society and he contributed many thought provoking articles about Bing's illustrious career. His articles entitled "The Magic Voice" drew much acclaim and for many issues he drew the front page of Crosby Post.

Ted held a variety of jobs but his passion was his interest in popular culture, the cinema and his beloved New Orleans Jazz. In the early sixties he joined and played trumpet in The Commodore New Orleans Jazz band appearing at many local jazz venues. Latterly, Ted became a broadcaster for Angel Radio and made some 246 programmes all painstakingly scripted in longhand and timed to perfection.
Ted was a kind and reserved man, always seeing the good in people and always quick to help. It was my privilege to have known Ted from the late 1950's and in his very first letter to me in December 1957 he wrote "you will come to love those circular pieces of wax" and how prescient those words were as I now reflect on collecting Bing's 78's these past 62 years with gaps still to fill.
There is a saying that when an old man dies, a library burns down - never truer than in Ted's case.

Gordon Delasalle passed away on August 27th following a three month battle with leukaemia, He was a massive Crosby fan and even had the pleasure of meeting Der Bingle at his home shortly before Bing passed away. He had been a subscriber for many years and loved receiving the magazine. To the family and friends of Gordon, Ted and Barrie we extend our sincere condolences.

Bing Crosby on CD

This is my usual reminder that the following single CDs remain available from me.

Costs as follows:

UK	**£7.50**
Europe	**£9.50**
Rest of the world	**£10.50**

The price for the double CD is:

UK	**£9.50**
Ireland & Europe	**£11.50**
Rest of the world	**£15**

Members in the US and Canada should obtain their copies from Perry Huntoon and in Australia/New Zealand from David Currington.

- **BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS – Vols. 8, 9 and 10**
- **BING CROSBY and the Kraft Music Hall – Rare Original Survivors**
- **BING CROSBY – GOOD AND RARE VOL 3.**
- **JOIN BING & SING ALONG (2 CD SET)**

I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Michael Crampton *mdcrampton@gmail.com*

Dixie Lee to be Honored

We were surprised, but nevertheless very pleased, to see this announcement in July.

The Tennessee Historical Commission recently approved an application to honor Harriman native and Actress of the Golden Age of Hollywood, Dixie Lee.

Dixie was born in the Walnut Hill neighborhood in Harriman near the intersection of Oak and Maple Streets, where the marker will be installed later this year. Unfortunately, the modest wooden frame house that was located on the property was destroyed by fire in 1959.

Dixie Lee was born November 4, 1909 as Wilma Winifred Wyatt, although she later claimed to have been born in 1911. Wilma was the youngest of three daughters born to East Tennessee natives, Evan Wyatt and Nora Scarborough Wyatt. Throughout her youth her family moved several times due to her father's career as an insurance agent, eventually ending up in Chicago, Illinois where Wilma entered and won an amateur singing contest at the Sherman Hotel in 1928. This led to her being offered a part in a Broadway play and ultimately to her being discovered by Fox Film Corporation.

Dixie and Bing in the 1930s.

Her name was changed to "Dixie Lee" to avoid confusion with another actress with a similar name. She made her big screen debut in Fox's *Movietone Follies of 1929.* She went on to have major and minor roles in at least 17 known films. In 1930, she met and married a little known up-and-coming crooner by the name of Harry Lillis Crosby, Jr., or "Bing Crosby" as he would later become known. She retired from acting in 1935, and helped Bing raise their 4 boys. She died November 1, 1952, from ovarian cancer.

Over the years, she has been largely forgotten and become a footnote in her famous husband's story. However, this talented Harriman native will now be remembered for who she was and the talent she possessed. Details for a public dedication will be released later this year.

The City would like to thank Dixie Lee's granddaughter in California and Chris Hammond from Powell, Tennessee without whom this application would not have been successful.

(Editor: Interesting to note Dixie's real date of birth. I checked the 1920 census which was conducted by the Census Bureau within one month from January 5, 1920 and she is shown as being 10 at that time so the 1909 date is duly

verified. Also the Associated Press release about her marriage to Bing in 1930 had her age as 20 too.

Chris Hammond has since made contact with us. He is a public school teacher in East Tennessee and a huge Dixie Lee fan. He has provided further information which tends to confirm the 1909 date. Amazing how we learn new facts so many years after the event.)

Nathaniel Crosby's Second Walker Cup at Royal Liverpool Promises Better Memories

John Strege, writing on GolfDigest.com on September 2 highlighted Nathaniel's Crosby's captaincy of the USA Walker Cup team in September.

A steak house seems a fitting venue at which to address an old beef, and Nathaniel Crosby had one. It had festered for a while, though time had eroded its sharper edges and the issue lay dormant until it resurfaced somewhere between aperitif and vintage port.

Seven past captains of U.S. Walker Cup teams had assembled at Ruth's Chris Steak House in West Palm Beach in early 2018 to salute Crosby, who had just recently been named to lead the Americans in 2019, and to offer him advice. Among them was Jay Sigel, a playing captain at the matches at Royal Liverpool Golf Club in 1983 when Crosby was a member of his team.

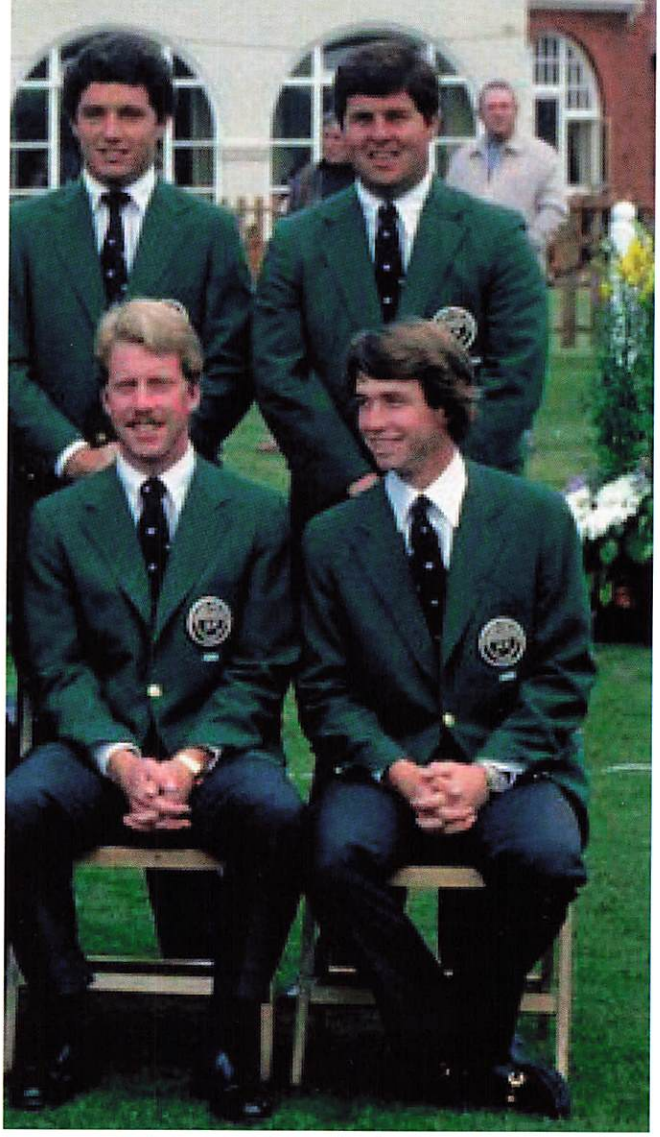
When it came around to Sigel, he turned to Crosby and said, "Whatever you do, play all your players three times."

A spit-take in range of prime beef generally is considered bad form, and Crosby restrained himself. Presumably. But he made his point. "You benched me twice," Crosby said to Sigel. "I've been holding this baggage for 35 years."

The mood was convivial and all in good fun. Sigel apparently had not recalled having kept Crosby out of half the four sessions, and Crosby harbors no true ill will toward Sigel. But the experience undeniably left a scar, notwithstanding the Americans' three-point victory.

"I was kind of mad," Crosby said recently, noting that the '83 Walker Cup took a distant second to his experience in the World Amateur Team Championship in Switzerland the year before, when his final-round 68 propelled a U.S. team that included Sigel to a victory. "The Walker Cup was not nearly as wonderful as the World Amateur."

Now 57 and the captain of the U.S. team, Crosby returns this week to Royal Liverpool Golf Club, site of the 47th Walker Cup, and he brings with him virtually a blank slate on which to create memories. "I don't remember much," he said of his prior experience there.



Nathaniel, front right in the 1983 Walker Cup team.

Royal Liverpool, in fact, registers barely a blip in the voluminous Crosby family album filled largely by the family patriarch, the legendary entertainer Bing Crosby, Nathaniel's father.

Bing was an unabashed Anglophile and a devotee of British golf courses. On one business trip to London, in 1971, he flew into Scotland, played the two existing courses at Gleneagles, Turnberry, the Old Course at St. Andrews, Muirfield, Sunningdale, Royal West Norfolk, Huntercombe and Royal St. George's before getting around to the reason he was in the U.K.– business.

Yet there is no evidence that Bing ever played Royal Liverpool, though he did perform at the historic Empire Theater in Liverpool, about 10 miles east of Hoylake. *(Note – he performed in Manchester, not Liverpool.)* His only brush with the course was when he was considering playing the British Amateur when it was held there in 1953, until a British sportswriter, Desmond Hackett, pointedly suggested he not.

Hackett noted that when Crosby had played the British Amateur at the Old Course at St. Andrews in 1950 female admirers "ran screaming all over the course, treading thru bunkers, stamping their ignorance on the greens with high-heeled shoes …

"Bing Crosby is entitled like any other golf-minded citizen to enter for the Amateur so long as he complies

with the rules which set down plainly but firmly, 'I am eligible under conditions of the championship and have a handicap not exceeding three strokes.' If Bing Crosby can play to three, then I am entitled to top billing at the Palladium."

Bing did play to a three, but chose not to compete at Hoylake, no doubt to the dismay of those who would have enjoyed seeing him. It would not have been a small turnout, either, for an entertainer held in the highest regard there for his talent, fame and, especially, his contributions to the war effort, in entertaining troops and raising funds.

Thirty years later and six years after Bing's death, Nathaniel drew crowds on and off the course at Royal Liverpool in 1983 thanks at least in part to his family ties.

"…[E]ven though he wasn't necessarily the most feared golfer in the USA team, he was definitely the one who aroused the most curiosity," head professional John Heggerty recalled in Royal Liverpool Golf Club Magazine's 2018-2019 edition.

"You have to remember that all those years ago the Crosby name was much more firmly in people's imaginations than it is now, even though Bing Crosby had passed away a few years earlier … so Nathaniel had something of the celebrity about him, especially to non-golfers."

Heggerty noted that Crosby and a few of his teammates ventured to Liverpool's Green Lodge pub one night. When word spread that he was there, a crowd gathered. Crosby does not recall that, other than noting that in those days, including his few years as a professional on the European Tour, he often drew "disproportionate crowds to who I was," he said. "I didn't pull like Seve, but there was a curiosity factor."

What Crosby does remember of the Walker Cup was an amusing story involving him and his caddie, who bore an uncanny resemblance to Rod Stewart. "Everybody called him Rod," Crosby said. Golfers in those days provided their own practice balls and their caddies shagged them for the player.

"You've got to go shag some balls for me," Crosby said to Rod within earshot of the gallery that included women aghast at him using the word "shag," a vulgarity according to its British definition.

What he also remembers was sitting out the morning foursomes on the first day, then getting routed by GB&I's Phillip Parkin, 6 and 4, in the afternoon singles. In morning foursomes the second day, he and William Hoffer beat George Macgregor and Phillip Walton, 2 up.

"We beat their best team," Crosby, the '81 U.S. Amateur champion, said. "I played out of my wazoo." Then he was benched in afternoon singles, "an emotional slight," he called it. "There's definitely some baggage for me that I got benched twice."

But that was then and this is now, an opportunity that moves near the top of a golf career that largely wasn't.

"To be honest, the way my career went, retiring at 26 in front of my girlfriend and my dog, I took a step back and chose not to play competitive golf as an adult," he said. "I was a poster child for the possibly sobering event of not going on to be a PGA Tour star.

"But being a Walker Cup captain is a real privilege, carrying on in my dad's tradition, a little bit. A great way for to me to give back."

He was never entirely certain he would get the nod, notwithstanding what he calls generational friendships with so many USGA presidents and executive committee members, including Sandy Tatum, Grant Spaeth, P.J. Boatwright, Jim Hand and Harry Easterly from his youth.

"Now I've come full circle," he said. "Stu Francis [president-elect of the USGA] and Diana Murphy [a past USGA president] are great friends. Her step daughter went to high school with me at Burlingame [Calif.] High. Stu and I have been friends playing golf at Burlingame Country Club [in Hillsborough, Calif.] since I was 14 years old."

Crosby's concern about his potential candidacy was twofold. He had played professional golf, which in USGA Walker Cup circles is not a resume enhancer, and he had played only a single USGA event, the U.S. Mid-Amateur, since regaining his amateur status in 1994.

"I haven't had a great moment in 35 years, haven't won a tournament in 35 years," Crosby told Golf Digest when his appointment was announced.

Nathaniel Crosby, Captain of the USA Walker Cup team 2019.

When Murphy called to inform him that he would captain the 2019 U.S. team, he was breathless, he said, and his captaincy already qualifies as a great moment personally. "It's the younger generation that makes it special," he said. Crosby, in his duties as captain, attended the Western Amateur, the Porter Cup and the U.S. Amateur, among other tournaments, scouting and acquainting himself with potential team members. "It's already been an incredible experience, getting to meet the kids and the families, having these kids texting me."

He received a text one night from Vanderbilt star John Augenstein, the runner-up at last month's U.S. Amateur, who had recalled that a Crosby friend is Scott DeSano, founder of the DeSano's pizza chain. "Hey, Captain," he wrote, "I'm at DeSano's Pizza."

Another favorite is University of Texas star Cole Hammer, the No. 1 golfer in the World Amateur Golf Ranking. "I watched him win 11 straight matches last year," Crosby said. "I've already filed adoption papers. I've told his parents they have to make room for me in the family."

Both Augenstein and Hammer are on the Walker Cup team, and it is reasonable to expect that neither of them, nor their eight other teammates, will sit more than one session.

Crosby might recall little from his first go-round at Royal Liverpool, but he remembers too well having been consigned twice to the role of spectator.

John Strege

(Editor: Many of you will be aware of the outcome of the Walker Cup match and this is what Derek Lawrenson writing in the Daily Mail on September 8 had to say.)

USA Roar Back as Nathaniel Crosby's Singles Strike Right Note in Hollywood-Style Happy Ending at Walker Cup

Trust Bing Crosby's son to mark his first stint as America's Walker Cup captain with a Hollywood-style happy ending.

In true blockbuster fashion, things looked pretty hairy for a while at Royal Liverpool, with the home side holding a one-point lead going into the final afternoon singles session.

Nathaniel Crosby lifts the Walker Cup at Royal Liverpool 2019.

But when the credits rolled at the prize presentation, it was Nathaniel Crosby holding the trophy, following a barnstorming singles performance from his team that ripped the heart from the British and Irish challenge.

The Americans won no fewer than eight of those 10 matches for a 15.5-10.5 shellacking that gave them their first overseas triumph since 2007, when they sent a team featuring the likes of Rickie Fowler, Webb Simpson and Dustin Johnson to Royal County Down.

'I can't tell you how proud I am of the way my team played,' said Crosby. 'It was an amazing effort and has left each of us with a memory we're going to cherish for the rest of our lives.'

(Editor: Our sincere congratulations to Nathaniel who clearly built a very good team rapport. His dad would have been really proud.)

"Where the Turf Meets the Surf"

I was delighted to read that the opening of the Del Mar season in July had Bing's grandson, Phil Crosby Jr. singing the track's theme song. Diane Bell of The San Diego Union-Tribune described the occasion.

July 17-- DEL MAR, Calif. - Bing Crosby's memory was alive and well at the Del Mar racetrack Wednesday. His grandson, Phil Crosby Jr., sang the track's theme song, "Where the Turf Meets the Surf," before the fourth race. It was recorded in 1938 (sic) by Bing Crosby, who co-founded the track and greeted the first fan when it opened in 1937.

Phil brought his mother, Peggy Crosby Klugman, along for the ride. She's the widow of actor Jack Klugman, who raised thoroughbreds at his ranch. With racing in the family genes, it was fitting that Crosby family members helped open the track's 80th horse racing season. (If the math doesn't compute, it's because the track was dark in 1942-44 during World War II.)

Phil in action at Del Mar.

It's the first time that Phil, a crooner like his granddad, has taken the racetrack mike. "It feels great! Del Mar has a special connection with my family and my grandfather's legacy," he said, adding that it was even more special that the spirit of the song into which Bing put so much love is being kept alive. "You can hear his affection for the races and the track in the recording, and that makes me feel very close to him," Phil said.

Opening Day was alive with elbow-to-elbow crowds, prancing horses, creatively decorated hats, runway apparel, lucky charms, horse-themed accessories, studious bettors, partyers and more than a few horse fans who called in sick to be there.

Going My Way in Warrington, UK

Jason Liddiard reports on his branch meeting in July.

The unbeatable 'Bing Crosby, His legendary Years' CD boxset could be heard in the background greeting attendees to our summer Bing fest, which was held on Saturday, 27th July; a day that brought a short respite in the Mediterranean weather we'd been experiencing during the preceding week. Notwithstanding, our opener was Irving Berlin's *Heat Wave* from Bing's 1956 outing with Buddy Bregman.

We followed up with a selection of 'summer through the years' - Bing songs across the decades that have a summer theme or reference: *A Faded Summer Love* (1931); *In the Good Old Summertime* (1954) and, finally, *Summer Wind* recorded at the BBC Maida Vale studios 11th October, 1977.

Requests from members who were not able to make it to the meeting this time included *Gone Fishin'* with Louis Armstrong and *Did You Ever See a Dream Walking*, a Bing classic from 1933. We then took some time out to discuss ideas and feedback received from members worldwide regarding the magazine's future which, all things considered, looks quite rosy!

For our 'Bing in the thirties' feature we showed a pristine version of the Mack Sennett short *Sing, Bing, Sing*. Made in Hollywood in 1932 and released in 1933, this is number five in the sequence of six shorts Bing made for Mack Sennett in 1931/32.

It was our editor's turn to present his 'Crosby Dozen' this time. Malcolm's selection, as you might imagine, was an absolute joy to hear! Slotted in amongst some golden studio recordings was a staggering Woodbury radio version of *The Last Round-Up* from December 1933 and the Paramount soundtrack version of *The Kiss in Your Eyes* from *The Emperor Waltz*. The final track on the compilation was the London Palladium 'live' version of *That's What Life is All About*. I'm always envious when watching the faces of members reminiscing about seeing Bing in the UK in 1976/77. I could see as I glanced around the room that this particular choice had transported our attendees' minds back there to the Palladium auditorium. Thanks for a very special dozen, Malcolm!

When I kicked off the 'Crosby Dozen' idea back in spring 2018, I had no idea if it would take off or not. To think that members have enthusiastically provided their lists for playing and discussing, since then until now is a great tribute to their willingness to get involved and share their Crosby memories and favourites. There have been two nice side effects of this particular feature: hearing tracks we may not have heard before and getting to know one another through

Jason cuts the cake.

the stories that accompany each of the choices. My thanks to everyone who has contributed and helped to make this feature a great success.

Time for a refreshment break and, as it was our third anniversary there was the obligatory cake (like we need an excuse)! This also provided a chance to peruse and purchase, via donations, some interesting Crosbyana brought along by our Secretary and all for the benefit of the club.

Part two of the afternoon began with another of Keith Richmond's well-researched centenary tributes. The subject this time around was Nat 'King' Cole, born 17th March, 1919. To highlight his connection with Bing we played their duet of *Sam's Song*, from a Chesterfield show of February, 1951. Nat's recording of *Mona Lisa* spent five weeks at No.1 in 1950. As a further tribute to Nat we played Bing's version from 1956, accompanied by Jack Pleis with Jud Conlon's Rythmaires.

Our film choice came once more courtesy of Malcolm Macfarlane, who had brought along a superb DVD version of *Just for You*. Quite timely, as this 1952 film had just been reviewed by David Lobosco in BING #182. So we all settled down to watch Bing in colour (except for his hair, which was grey…)

As usual, I ended up dropping a couple of items from the programme, as we had overrun due to so much interaction and discussion around our man's incredible library of output.

We closed by playing Bing's 1950 recording of *A Perfect Day*, thus perpetuating a tradition started by Michael Crampton at the much-missed Leeds meetings over fifty years ago.

Jason Liddiard *email: jkl@galleryjkl.com*

A Salute to Bing Crosby and The Andrews Sisters

It was good to see this publicity about this forthcoming show.

> "Artists Lounge Live presents *Swinging on a Star, A Salute to Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters* starring Broadway's Jared Bradshaw on Tuesday, December 17, at Marriott Theatre, 10 Marriott Drive, Lincolnshire, IL 60069, USA. *(Editor: I had not realized that there was also a Lincolnshire in Illinois.)*
>
> Tis the season to be jolly as Broadway baritone Jared Bradshaw celebrates Bing Crosby, the crooner who immortalized the most famous secular Christmas song of all time - "White Christmas." Bradshaw is a veteran of the Great White Way, appearing in *Jersey Boys* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.* Lauded as "immensely talented" by Associated Press, Bradshaw is an entertainer possessing the easy charm of a bygone era. Also featuring a trio of talented dolls singing the infectious harmonies of the Andrews Sisters, this is one humdinger of a good time! Traditional favorites include "Jingle Bells," "Chattanooga Choo-Choo," "Mele Kalikimaka," and of course, "White Christmas." Presented by Artists Lounge Live."

Mr. Bradshaw has presented shows about Bing in the past including one called "A Bing Crosby Christmas" in 2018. You can hear examples of his work on YouTube and he has a pleasant easy-to-listen-to voice.

Hey Jude, Hey Bing

Your editor received the following email in June.

> *I came across your website www.bingmagazine.co.uk while searching for Bing Crosby. I have a one-of-a-kind reel-to-reel recording of Bing Crosby outtakes while recording "Hey Jude" in 1969 (?).*
> *My dad was the engineer on that project and he recorded the outtakes and saved the reel all these years. It is in playing condition if one is careful. Do you know of anyone I can contact who would be interested in buying it?*

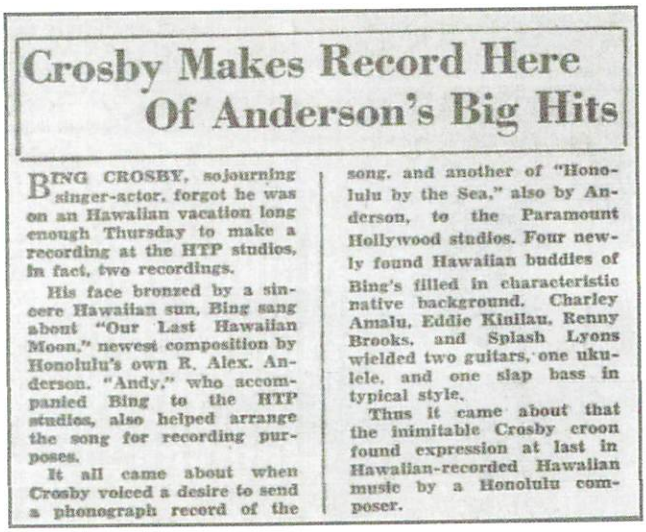
Naturally, I replied enthusiastically while pointing out how few people had reel to reel recorders nowadays. No reply was received despite a couple of follow-ups. I wonder if the tracks will surface some day?

Our Last Hawaiian Moon

Brian Phelps of Oregon wrote to us in September as follows:

> *"I have what I believe is a previously unknown 78 recorded by Bing Crosby on October 1, 1936. See the attached photo of the label. This song appears on no discographies, and I can find no mention of it in any archives. I suspect he did this as a personal project during his 1936 extended Hawaiian vacation. I'm wondering if you could shed some light on this. Any help would be appreciated. The record is playable, in fair condition."*

We knew that Bing had made a demo recording of "Sweet Leilani" when he was in Hawaii in 1936 but we knew nothing of this song. I searched through various Hawaiian newspapers around October 1, 1936 and I struck gold! The Honolulu Advertiser of October 4, 1936 contained the following.



Crosby Makes Record Here Of Anderson's Big Hits

BING CROSBY, sojourning singer-actor, forgot he was on an Hawaiian vacation long enough Thursday to make a recording at the HTP studios, in fact, two recordings.

His face bronzed by a sincere Hawaiian sun, Bing sang about "Our Last Hawaiian Moon," newest composition by Honolulu's own R. Alex. Anderson. "Andy," who accompanied Bing to the HTP studios, also helped arrange the song for recording purposes.

It all came about when Crosby voiced a desire to send a phonograph record of the song, and another of "Honolulu by the Sea," also by Anderson, to the Paramount Hollywood studios. Four newly found Hawaiian buddies of Bing's filled in characteristic native background. Charley Amalu, Eddie Kinilau, Renny Brooks, and Splash Lyons wielded two guitars, one ukulele, and one slap bass in typical style.

Thus it came about that the inimitable Crosby croon found expression at last in Hawaiian-recorded Hawaiian music by a Honolulu composer.

I sent details to Mr. Phelps who replied:

> *"Eureka! Amazing!*
>
> *I don't have the other record. I am not a collector. I was a starving med student in San Francisco in the late 90's, and I just bought a Victrola to impress girls. It didn't do that, but it played records well enough, so I spent a couple afternoons rummaging through boxes in Jack's Record Cellar. If you had patience and some knowledge of music, you could find real bargains there. I had neither, and to be honest, wasn't at that time even a Bing Crosby fan. But this label suggested some kind of story.*
>
> *For the next 20 years I listened to this record a couple times a year, and would often hum the melody while at work. I gradually developed more of an appreciation for Bing. So, ironically, I came to his popular music through a previously unknown song.*
>
> *The record and the Victrola moved with me across a few states and back, and finally out to my off-grid yurt in the woods, where I lived for a few months building our house. It was my only source of music. Last week we redecorated the yurt (still on the property), and I decided someone else should have my Victrola and meager collection. For the first time, I searched discographies for that song and found that it didn't seem to exist. My local record-store owner suggested I reach out to Bing's estate, and eventually I connected with Kelly Rovegno at Gonzaga University, who sent me the link which led me to you.*
>
> *Here is an mp3. My Victrola was set to 78, but it sounds perhaps a little sluggish to me. What a beautiful song.*
>
> *Thanks for solving the puzzle, although I get the sense there may still be more to learn. I don't know what my plans are for the record, but of course it should be preserved, digitized, and perhaps in the possession of a serious collector. By the way, the backside is unlabeled but plays a slightly longer version of the same song."*

The record had obviously had a lot of wear and was indeed very sluggish. I speeded it up and removed a few bumps and sent the edited MP3 back to Mr. Phelps who was duly impressed.

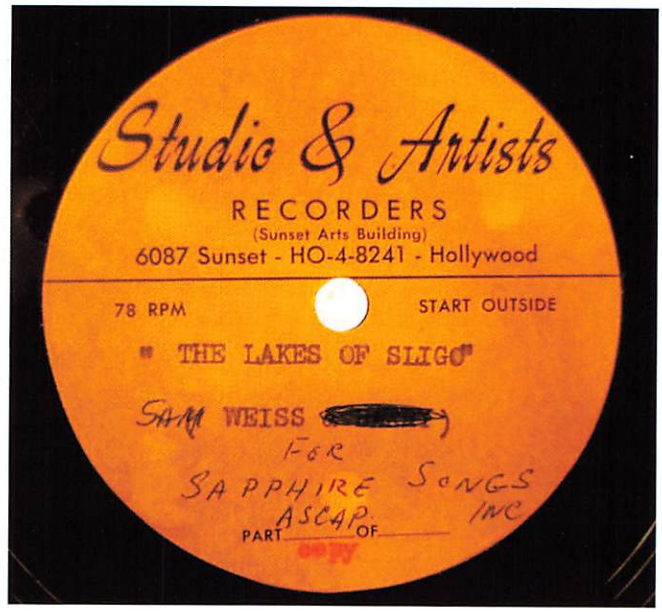
Clearly, the song was not popular at the time although it was recorded on December 4, 1936 by Ray Kinney with Dick McIntire and His Harmony Hawaiians on Decca 1223A. No doubt this was due to Bing's influence.

Incidentally, R. Alex Anderson (1894-1995) was the writer of the Crosby hit "Mele Kalikimaka" and of "Lovely Hula Hands" which Bing recorded in 1963.

Mr, Phelps subsequently decided to sell the record and I am delighted to be able to tell you that it has been purchased by our member John Newton!

More Unreleased Crosby?

Ron McBride told us about two recordings sold on eBay in May and he wonders whether they are unreleased items by Bing.



The first is "I Will Go Back to Ireland" and the seller, who has an excellent track record on eBay, described it as:

> *Personal owned records of the late Bing Crosby – test pressings – one of a kind recordings? These records were purchased at auction in San Francisco in 1982. Personally owned by Bing Crosby. I purchased these from the widow of a Bing Crosby fan who attended the auction. She said these records have been stored in the garage ever since. I listened to it several times trying to find some info on this song sung by Bing Crosby. Ii is not in his discography. Leeds Music was bought by MCA in 1964, so this recording was made sometime after that.*

It was sold for $58.50

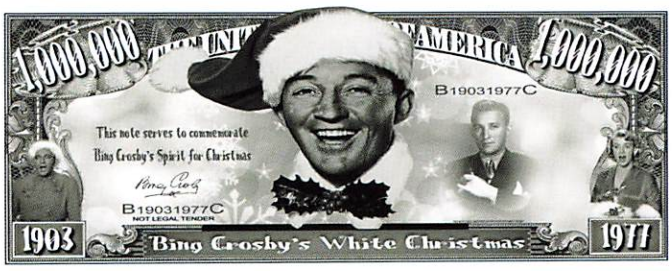
The same seller sold another disc called "The Lakes of Sligo" using more or less the same description for $83.50. The song was written by Milton Drake and Al Frisch and published in 1957.

There is no sign of either song in the ASCAP or BMI catalogues. I wonder whether they were demos sent to Bing in case he wanted to record them.

I have looked through the Butterfields catalog for the sale in 1982 and the items are not listed separately but could be part of miscellaneous lots numbered 1763 to 1767.

Further information awaited. Both records were purchased by the same person and maybe they will make contact with us.

While on the subject of unknown Bing recordings, John Bassett has news of more alleged missing Bing tracks.



Trusted Sources Reveal Newly Discovered Recordings

In my previous article published in BING-182 I discussed various matters relating to the legendary 1926 recording of "I've Got the Girl". Since then I have unearthed a further selection of snippets for your delectation and I leave you, the reader, to either accept or reject them on the grounds of being feasible or erroneous.

All the information conveyed in the following paragraphs is extracted from the Discography of American Historical Recordings, which will be abbreviated to DAHR from hereon. DAHR, in turn, has drawn much of its findings from some very reliable sources, one of which is "The Columbia Master Book Discography" compiled by Tim Brooks and Brian Rust. The name of Brian Rust is held in high esteem by collectors worldwide. Sadly, he died in 2011 at the age of 88 but his legacy lives on. Born in London in 1922 he started collecting records from the age of five and eventually worked in the BBC Gramophone Library from 1945 to 1960. At my request he wrote an account of this 15-year period entitled "Bing at the BBC" and I published his article in the December 1984 edition of "BINGVILLE NEWS". Brian's discographical research remains unsurpassed and the numerous books and sleeve notes bearing his name are proof of his encyclopaedic knowledge in the field of recorded entertainment.

A rather less reliable source used by DAHR is "The Decca Labels: A Discography" compiled by Michel Ruppli. According to Internet sources, Ruppli is a renowned author and discographer whose projects have embraced contemporary labels such as Atlantic, Verve and Mercury. His study of the Decca output interestingly offers a batch of titles supposedly recorded by Bing between 1940 and 1955, all of which are open to considerable debate. These can be perused in the latter part of this article.

Firstly, we will examine the information proffered by the Brooks and Rust Columbia discography. The following is a slightly abridged version of how the entry appears in DAHR.

Columbia 824-D (10-in. double-faced)
The following matrix(es) were released with this catalogue number: (my underlining)
W142784 Take 2 "Idolizing"
W142784 Take 3 "Idolizing"

Don Clark and his Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel Orchestra
with Betty Patrick (vocal)

W142785 Take 2 "I've Got the Girl"
W142785 Take 3 "I've Got the Girl"

Don Clark and his Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel Orchestra with Bing Crosby (baritone vocal) and Al Rinker (tenor vocal)

In addition to this remarkable disclosure, DAHR goes on to show "Don't Somebody Need Somebody" (W142786) as having a male vocal solo by Bing. Apparently, three Takes were recorded but none were issued. The revelation regarding "I've Got the Girl" is guaranteed to prompt every owner of Columbia 824-D to scrutinise his or her copy of the disc in the hope of discovering Take 2.

Now follows a list of titles gleaned from Ruppli's Decca discography. American collectors are asked to note that I have shown the recording dates in the recognised UK order of day, month and year. Except where indicated, all titles have been commercially issued on either shellac or vinyl.

DLA1972-A	10/4/40 "I'm Nobody's Baby"
DLA1973-A	10/4/40 "Bud's Won't Bud"
DLA1974-A	10/4/40 "The Wearing of the Green"
DLA2140-A	10/9/40 "Take Me Back Again"
DLA2141-A	10/9/40 "I'll Come Back to You"
DLA2142-B	10/9/40 "You're Bound to Look Like a Monkey When You Get Old"
L3967-A	14/9/45 "Rip Van Winkle" part 2 (unissued)
L4186-A	16/5/46 "Baby, Whatta Ya Gonna Do?"
L4192-A	21/5/46 "Five Minutes More"
L4245-A	24/7/46 "Puttin' on the Ritz"
L5824-A	6/9/50 "Watchin' the Trains Go By"
L5825-A	6/9/50 "Rainbow Gal"
NA2685-A	23/3/52 "Easy on the Eyes" (unissued)
L6758-A	9/5/52 "I Wonder"
L6759-A	9/5/52 "Crazy, She Calls Me"

L7706-A	24/5/54 "Love, You Didn't Do Right By Me"
L7707-A	24/5/54 "Sisters"
L7708-A	24/5/54 "It's Because We're in Love" (unissued)
88900-A	8/11/55 "You Don't Have to be a Santa Claus"
L8851-A	13/12/55 "Well, All Right"
L8852-A	13/12/55 "Midnight Sun"

With regard to L3967-A, and notwithstanding the fact that Ruppli shows it as being unissued, one cannot assume that this is part of the recording used on the B-side of the UK album, Ace of Hearts AH 136. Having consulted the sleeve of this album, I see that the score for Walter Huston's narration was composed and directed by Wilbur Hatch, and not Victor Young as stated in the DAHR entry, therefore we must acknowledge the fact that this is a different version of the Washington Irving story.

Of the 21 "Bing Crosby" titles listed above, 18 can be eliminated fairly easily if one has access to the issued 78s and albums on which they appear. However, the three remaining titles shown as unissued are irrefutably the most intriguing.

I can foresee scores of readers, having digested this article, scurrying to their respective collections and reference books with an immediate desire to resolve at least one or two of these dubious claims, and I know that our Editor will gladly publish any results thus obtained. It is inevitable that some queries will remain unanswered, certainly in my lifetime, but it is my fervent wish that future generations will follow in our footsteps and continue to study and relish the recorded output of the greatest popular singer of all time.

John Bassett

(Editor: Many thanks John for highlighting these discographical matters. The DAHR can be found online at **https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/index.php** *and can be searched very easily. Turning to the 21 supposed Bing tracks gleaned from Ruppli's Decca discography, we can quickly dismiss 18 of them.*

"I'm Nobody's Baby, "Buds Won't Bud" and "The Wearing of the Green" are all Judy Garland records.

Bing is not present on the Bob Crosby recordings of "Take Me Back Again" and "I'll Come Back to You". The vocal on the Bob Crosby record of "You're Bound to Look Like a Monkey etc" is by Nappy Lamarr.

"Baby, Whatta Ya Gonna Do" is by Helen Forrest with The Chickadees.

Bing does not sing on the Bob Crosby recording of "Five Minutes More" or on the Fred Astaire record of "Puttin' on the Ritz".

Bob Crosby is the vocalist on "Watchin' the Trains Go By" and "Rainbow Gal".

"I Wonder" and "Crazy She Calls Me" are by George Auld.

"Love, You Didn't Do Right by Me" is by Peggy Lee alone as is "Sisters" (It would have been strange to hear Bing duetting on "Sisters"!).

"You Don't Have to Be a Santa Claus" is by The Mills Bros – no Bing.

"Well, All Right" and "Midnight Sun" are both by Alvino Rey.

It's appalling to note such inaccurate information being published and it will no doubt lead many Crosby fans up blind alleys looking for these recordings. I have emailed the DAHR pointing out the errors.

However we are left with three unissued Crosby tracks listed by Ruppli which could be hitherto unknown Crosby tracks. The first is a version of "It's Because We're in Love" from 1954 which is supposedly a duet between Mr. Crosby and Peggy Lee. This is however listed in the Peggy Lee Discography with no mention of Bing.

Secondly, a Decca recording on September 14, 1945 of "Rip Van Winkle – part 2" (L3967-A) is shown as being recorded with Victor Young and His Orchestra. Bing was in the Decca studio that day so it's a possible unknown Crosby recording. But what about part 1? Is that by Bing too?

The third unissued track "Easy on the Eyes" with Grady Martin in 1952 is also a possibility. The song was a hit for Eddy Arnold in 1948 and it could be that this track was also submitted to Bing when he added his vocals to "Just a Little Lovin'" Incidentally the accepted recording date of March 23, 1952 for the last mentioned song is undoubtedly wrong. I think this was the date that Grady Martin recorded it in Nashville. April 24, 1952 is the probable date when Bing overdubbed the instrumental track with his vocal. Developments awaited.)

Bing at the BBC

John Bassett mentioned an article by Brian Rust in the December 1984 issue of BINGVILLE NEWS and he has kindly allowed us to reproduce it here.

In the September issue of this magazine, there was a paragraph referring to the BBC Gramophone Library, and its contents specifically of Bing Crosby records. I have been asked to supply some details of this, but it must be remembered that twenty-four years have passed since I worked in the Library, and in that length of time, changes must inevitably have taken place.

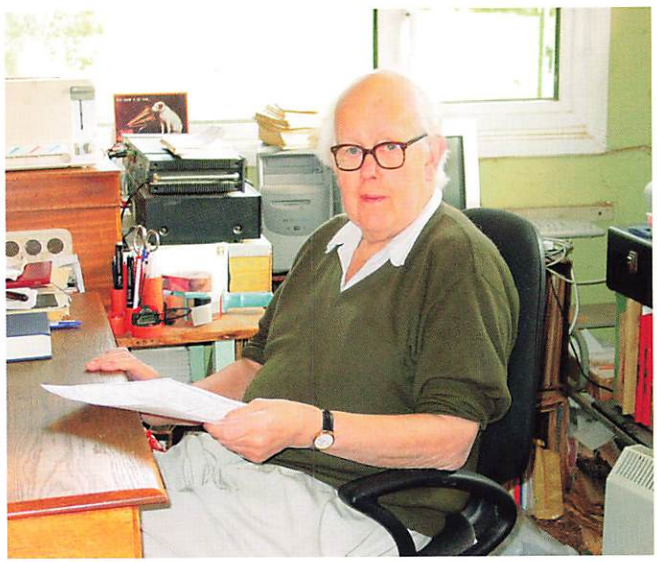
Nevertheless, it is most unlikely that there will have been a considerable number of Bing's records acquired by the Library, at least in 78 rpm form, since I left in December, 1960. Any LPs, whether of contemporary or earlier material, issued in the United Kingdom or elsewhere (if they are of unusual importance) will have been added automatically to the huge collection now housed in Egton House, just across the street from Broadcasting House itself.

As a confirmed 78 man myself, I have a pretty good idea of the state of the collection as far as Bing is concerned, and I was personally responsible for its acquisition, sometime in the mid-fifties, of the rare French HMV of Paul Whiteman's *Muddy Water* (which was also scheduled for issue here, by the way, but for some reason it never made it).

From memory, I know that all, or virtually all, the Brunswick issues of Bing Crosby's work are represented by at least one copy, even the comparatively rare earlier ones such as *With Summer Coming On* and *What Do I Care? It's Home!* being included in the collection. So is the elusive twelve-inch *Lawd, You Made the Night Too Long*, but as far as I know, such curiosa as the two noticeably different takes of *St. Louis Blues* with Duke Ellington and his Famous Orchestra are only represented by the usual Brunswick 0116 and Columbia DX-898.

The Columbia reissues are all in the Library, and as they have superior surfaces, they are the ones usually called on by any programme compiler wishing to play early-thirties Bing. His anonymous vocals with Paul Whiteman, on Victor, Columbia or HMV, and those with the Dorseys and Sam Lanin on Okeh/Parlophone and Gus Arnheim (Victor/ HMV) are very thin on the ground. The reason is that they were all issued prior to 1932, when the Library was founded. Also, it was normal policy to keep the racking space needed for a burgeoning collection to within quite stringent limits, and popular records, once it was judged their day was passed, were eliminated quite ruthlessly. A little later on, however, as the Department expanded, and the powers-that-be became increasingly aware of the value of all kinds of records, this ridiculous system was abandoned, and when Miss Valentine Britten, late of HMV's Oxford Street shop, was appointed Librarian, she saw to it that all currently available records were admitted to the Library, and took steps to repair the damage done in the decade or so before.

No better person than Valentine Britten could have been put in charge of the Gramophone Library at that time, during the war. Gifted with incredible organizing ability linked with catholic tastes in music and sympathetic to the needs of all programme presenters and producers, she built the Library up from a haphazard handful of standard classics and what would now be called "Top of the Pops" into a well-documented, coherent unit. She scanned the lists of records for sale that arrived almost daily, and often delegated me to visit the would-be vendors and select that I considered would be useful to the Library on artistic, historical or special-interest grounds.



Brian at work.

The Library reached three-quarters of a million 78s before LPs ousted this form of recorded sound. Naturally, every effort was made to ensure they were all in transmissible condition, and it was surprising to me, as the roving ambassador, that so many people should consider it worthwhile offering beat-up rubbish to the Library. Every record is filed according to make, sub-divided by prefix (if any) and then catalogue number; the index, cross-referencing title, composer, artist and make, will supply the latter, and the filing system covers hundreds of steel drawers in modern cabinets.

At one time, of course, the 78s themselves were sent to the studio in carrying-cases, marked with the borrower's code in chinagraph on the run-off, the master-bag in the file being marked in exactly similar fashion. But since I discovered some thieving had been going on, one morning in June, 1957, arrangements were made to have original 78s locked away in a basement some distance from the Library itself, and if they were required, they were to be put on tape. This, of course, obviates not only possible loss by theft, but also safeguards against damage or destruction by breaking.

Records that were considered unfit for broadcasting because of the "improper" treatment of classics, inclusion of suggestive lyrics or outright obscenities, or references to commercial products or establishments (e.g. Woolworth's) were labelled "Not to be broadcast", and a committee sat once a month to consider the

fitness for broadcasting of every popular record. It is to his credit that Bing's records hardly *ever* received the "thumbs-down" signal, and the resultant NTBB label; during the war, *Mandy Is Two* was one, but this was soon revoked, and to this day I cannot hear anything in it that could possibly give offence or be looked on as advertising, albeit inadvertent.

There was one reissue, soon after I joined the Library, however, that with the two titles taken in juxtaposition, might be looked upon as suggestive, but of course, it was never banned on those grounds. It was *Let's Put out The Lights* and *Let's Try Again*.

Brian Rust

(Editor: Reading this, I was wondering what has happened to the BBC's 78 collection. Wikipedia has the following information but I'm not sure how up-to-date this is but it looks like that a lot of the 78s have gone.

"The archive consists of a number of different formats including wax cylinders, numerous gramophone records made from both shellac and vinyl as well as numerous more recordings on tape, CD and on digital audio tape (DAT). The difficulty of these different formats is the availability of the machines required to play them; some of the vinyl records in the archive are 16 inches in size and require large phonograph units to play, while the players for the wax cylinders and DATs are no longer in production. There are also 700,000 vinyl records, 180,000 78's records, 400,000 LP records and 350,000 CD's in the archive.

The Radio Digital Archive has been capturing radio programmes as broadcast quality wav files since 2008, with now over 1.5 million recordings growing daily. Some of the wax cylinder collection has been donated to the British Library. The Sound Archive is based at the new BBC Archive Centre in Perivale, along with the television archive, and was previously based at Windmill Road, Brentford.")

Review: Isle of Wight theatre group Curtain Up looks at Bing Crosby's life

I am often surprised by items that crop up regarding Mr. Crosby but this amateur dramatic group presentation on the UK's Isle of Wight really did amaze me. The following review appeared in the County Press on April 17.

A SHORT biographical revue of the life of Bing Crosby, *Going My Way*, was performed by Curtain Up Amateur Dramatic Group.

The script was written by musical director John Denby, after some detailed research into Bing Crosby's life, and the revue was performed at Totland Church Hall.

Due to a shortage of men, John had to swap the part of Bing's brother Everett to that of his sister Rose.

Set in Bing Crosby's Californian ranch in the 1950s, act one follows Bing, his mother Kate, sister Rose *(sic)* and wife Kathryn as they reminisce about his rise to fame and what to include in his autobiography.

With a young wife who says she 'wasn't born for most of his life', a sibling who hustles to get him the best deals and a mother who admonishes her son's faults but boasts about his successes in equal measure, we learn a lot about Bing Crosby's rise to fame.

Act two depicts a party at the Crosby ranch with guests, comedian Bob Hope and Bing's friend Harvey Shaeffer.

Bob Everson looked and sounded the part of Bing Crosby with some lovely solos, including "Moonlight Becomes You" and "As Time Goes By", capturing Crosby's laid back style perfectly.

In act two he was paired with Geoff Kirk as Bob Hope, with a sterling comedy performance from Kirk as the wise-cracking comedian, who got behind the character.

Bing Crosby's mother Kate was played by Cheryl May who aged up to play the matriarch. Cheryl showed off her superb voice with "Pennies from Heaven" and "Dinah".

Valerie Rezin gave an assured performance as Bing's sister Rose, a go-getting business woman. She also gave a lively rendition of "Swinging on a Star" which she sang with Dorothy Green and Janet Haire.

Nicola Watson as Kathryn, Bing's second wife, gave a warm and delightful portrayal. Alan Cass was a believable Harvey Shaeffer.

The musicians, Toby Elliott on drums and Mike Whitehead on double bass, with John on piano, produced upbeat and easy-listening tunes, which supported the singers without overpowering their voices.

The finale medley was a lovely idea. Janet gave an assured rendition of "Wrap Your Troubles", Dorothy delighted all with "Blue Skies".

It was a pleasure to hear Curtain Up newcomer Alan Cass sing "Just One More Chance" and "Spanish Town". The audience was encouraged to join in the comedy song "Goodnight Irene", a lovely comedic turn from Janet and Bob. Other vocalists included Mary Harvey and Pam Everson.

Director Cecelia Vivian certainly got the best from her cast, with full house performances on Friday and Saturday.

Well done to all involved on stage and behind the scenes.

(Editor: It really is great that the Curtain Up team were willing to put on such an imaginative play and hopefully it will have made many more people aware of Bing's life and career. And there's news of a Crosby tribute from the USA too.)

The Ever-cool Bing Crosby

The Shedd Institute's Musical Theatre Training Academy in Oregon presented its 12th semi-annual revue on July 6, *Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive - The Ever-cool Bing Crosby*, "a celebration of the legendary Bing Crosby (1903-77)." There were two shows (at 4:30 and 7:30 pm) and the scenes and musical numbers were as follows:

Set 1: Well Did You Evah! – Moonlight Becomes You – Captain Custard - Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive – The Merry Go Runaround – In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening – White Christmas

Set 2: Swinging on a Star – I'm an Old Cowhand – Going My Way – Road to Morocco – That's an Irish Lullaby - Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive

Wonderful! Isn't it nice to read about events such as these? I sent them an email wishing them every success.

The Fabulous Dorseys

Lorne Harasen remembers the Dorsey Brothers.

The fabulous, feuding Dorsey brothers, Tommy and Jimmy, were also part of the Bing Crosby story during their times of brotherly peace and familial war.

Jimmy and Tommy had terrible Irish tempers which often degenerated into fist fights and if someone tried to break up the scrap they ran the risk of being pummeled by the two brothers. The battles were so nasty that once Jimmy bent Tommy's trombone and Tommy smashed Jimmy's very expensive saxophone on the floor. They couldn't agree on musical arrangements and Jimmy thought that Tommy played corny notes.

Jimmy who had a drinking problem most of his life was primarily interested in music and golf. In 1927 he made friends with a personable young singer who also loved golf named Bing Crosby. Tommy liked to drink and the ladies and was keenly interested in the trombone which led to a friendship and professional association with another trombone player named Glenn Miller before Miller struck out on his own.

Jimmy Dorsey was most interested in jazz and fast brassy music. Tommy preferred slow, easy music. Both learned to play trumpet in their father's community band in Pennsylvania. When asked who of them was the best trumpet player the answer by both was "Harry James!" Enough said.

The Dorseys made up in 1933 and were doing very well financially in a combined effort with such members of the band as Glenn Miller, Ray McKinley and vocals by Crosby brother, Bob. Even though they were successful Jimmy and Tommy just couldn't get along and broke up in 1935 and went on to form their own, separate bands which were generally thought to be better than their single band. A big bone of contention between them was the tempo of various musical pieces. It once prompted Tommy to walk off a dance party stage in anger.

Bing Crosby recorded with a number of bands including the Dorseys. Jimmy left the Kraft Music Hall in 1937. He was replaced with the orchestra of John Scott Trotter who remained with Bing for 17 years. Some critics thought Crosby would have produced better recordings if he remained with the Dorseys and others. Still some argued that John Scott Trotter's objective was to make Bing sound better rather than showcasing his own orchestra. The volume of Bing's records sold in that period would clearly indicate that John Scott was right.

Tommy of course had much to do with launching the career of his band vocalist Frank Sinatra. Eventually Frank wanted to be freed of his contractual obligations. Tommy said no. Legend has it that a mobster came to Tommy's office and laid a pistol on his desk saying "You want to let Frank go don't you?" Sinatra was released. It's interesting to note that Frank Sinatra's replacement as Dorsey band vocalist was Ken Curtis who years later played Festus, Marshall Matt Dillon's seedy sidekick in the popular TV western *Gunsmoke*. If you don't believe that Curtis could sing just punch his name into the Internet and hear him for yourself.

At the height of the feud Bing had both Jimmy and Tommy as guests on the Kraft Music Hall on July 6, 1944. For awhile neither spoke to the other directly so they would ask Bing to ask the other questions. Bing finally asked the brothers to shake hands and ask their own questions. To the amusement of the audience Tommy said sarcastically, "Hi Jimmy old boy" to which Jimmy responded, "Hi Tommy old scout!"

Tommy (left) with Jimmy on the Kraft show.

The Dorseys decided to reunite in 1953 and remained so until Tommy died suddenly in 1956 at age 51 while Jimmy who was slightly less than two years older died six months later. Jimmy had a hit record entitled "So Rare" in 1957 which really closed out the heyday of the big bands. I was employed at Saskatoon's CFQC radio at the time and the record was played constantly.

Herb Sanford a long-time friend of the Dorseys wrote a book in 1972 titled "Tommy and Jimmy: The Dorsey Years". The introduction to the book was written by Bing Crosby.

Lorne Harasen

(Editor: Lorne's book about his long career titled, The Harasen Line, A Broadcaster's Memoir was published by FriesenPress, Suite 300 – 990 Fort St., Victoria British Columbia, V8V 3K2 Canada (www.friesenpress.com, e-book $4.99, paperback $18.99. Hardcover $29.99). To order it, either go to the publisher direct or order from Lorne at 86 Marquis Crescent, Regina Sk. S4S 6J9 Canada.)

Sing a Little, Swing a Little
That's what Bing is all about

The Listener **was a weekly magazine established by the BBC and it was developed as a medium of record for the reproduction of broadcast talks. The edition published on September 11, 1975 contained an article of particular interest to us.**

Bing Crosby is currently in London to record a new album with Fred Astaire, and to make a number of appearances on British television and radio. He was interviewed by Terry Wogan in 'Wogan's World' (Radio 4).

How would you feel about starting as a solo singer now, as a young man?
It would be very hard. I would certainly try, because I love music so much, but the competition nowadays is fierce. There are so many singers. When I started, there was Will Osborne and Rudy Vallee, Ozzie Nelson, Russ Columbo - that was all.

When you were on stage in your early days, did you pay an awful lot of attention to hand movement?
No, I never thought of it, really. I was educated in a Jesuit high school and a Jesuit college, and they put emphasis on public speaking, debating, elocution contests - I was in all of those - and we learned certain gestures that just became mechanical to us. I never really thought of any hand movement when I got into show business, because I had done so much of that in the Jesuit high school and college.

Have you ever gone back there to make a speech?
Yes, I've been back a couple of times to get some sort of degree. They didn't know what sort of degree to give me, because I didn't qualify for any of the educational types of degree, so they finally made me a Doctor of Music, whatever that is, and they gave me a scroll testifying to that fact. I've been back several times since, to receive little awards, and in connection with some buildings that I was instrumental in getting put up for them - a science building and a library, and a few things like that. I'm very close to the school, and always will be.

You took lessons for opera, didn't you?
No, not really. I took singing lessons from a teacher when I was about 12 years old, but he just taught me some scales. The kids I was running about with at the time thought it was cissy. They teased me about it: They mocked me when they heard me vocalising, so I didn't go back, and that has been the extent of my musical education. I never did learn to read, and I regret that very much because it would be much easier for me to rehearse, to learn songs more quickly. I have to have somebody play the melody for me, or else get me started on the melody, and then I can follow it along by going up or down.

But have you been a quick learner of songs? Hear it once...
No. I'd say it depends. These songs they are writing now are so intricate that it takes me quite a while to learn them - not so much the melody as the intervals. Songwriters used to write eight bars, eight bars, a middle strain and then eight bars at the finish; that was it. Now there are six-bar phrases, four-bar, no beats in between, or three beats in between, or three-and-a-half. I have to hear it several times before I can get it in my head.

I have never yet heard you knock modern music.
I think it's very exciting, this music they are writing today, and some of it is wonderfully well done. Particularly the harmonisations the groups employ - the progressions, the arrangements are fantastic. You know, I was a group singer with Whiteman, and then I was with the Rhythm Boys, and we thought 'boop boop be doop' and 'vo do de oh' were great stuff. These people do unimaginable things. I couldn't figure out how they work it out. They must be great students, have a good ear, or they must read like the devil.

You have just completed an LP with Fred Astaire.
I had a great three days with Fred, and we did some marvellous, very unusual songs. Some of them are very old Cole Porter, and some of them are brand new, from shows that are just opening on Broadway, but they are typical 'double' songs for two men, or a man and a woman, except we each sing a solo. He does a solo on a song that I introduced and made popular, called 'It's Easy to Remember', and I do a solo on a song he popularised, called 'Change Partners'.

With Fred in the recording studio.

Now that the LP is completed, what do you think of Fred Astaire as a singer?
He is a good singer. He has a style that is quite unique, and he has got a wonderful ear for music.

What does he think of you as a dancer?
He thinks I'm terrible. The only thing he ever said is I have a pretty good time-step, and that is something anybody who has been in vaudeville learns to do. From the time-step, you are supposed to develop a routine, but I never got that far.

You had a long gap before "Tie a Yellow Ribbon" didn't you, which was a big hit of 1973?
The last one was 'True Love'.

Yes, of course - with Grace Kelly.
Eighteen years between those two. I just never paid much attention to making records, because the last few I made didn't seem to do well. I thought the boat had sailed, you know. You might as well get off before you're pushed off. So I just didn't do much. I did an album with Basie, and several other albums, and not much happened, so I was kind of discouraged, until Ken Barnes came over with an album he had made with Johnny Mercer, with the Pete Moore arrangements. They sounded good, and I thought: 'I'd love to go to London. It's my favourite city in the world, so why not go there and make a couple of albums?'

When Grace Kelly made 'True Love' with you, it was one of your most successful duets ever, wasn't it? She wasn't regarded as a singer. Had you to do a lot of persuading?
The studio didn't want her to sing it at all. It was first assumed that she was going to sing it, but all along they had made plans for another girl to sing the song, and Grace would just mouth it, or 'lip sync' it. I knew how eager she was to try it, and she had a good ear, she could carry a tune, so I was furious. I said: 'You might as well use Grace and give her a chance.' I knew it was going to be her last picture, and she would treasure going out with a phonograph record that sold a million - the only one she ever made in her life. It would be a great conversation piece. She could dine out for weeks, down in Monte Carlo, on that. So I insisted that they let Grace sing it, and she sang it very well, I thought.

Another one in that film with you was Frank Sinatra.
We are very close friends. Sinatra gets a bad press some places, because he is Sicilian, he has a quick fuse. He is what I would call an implacable enemy and a loyal friend. If he's your friend, he's your friend for life, and it works the other way round. If you really touch him off wrong and do it consistently, he will never forgive you - never.

Hope, of course, is the one with whom you have always been associated. It is funny that the only time the two of you have ever lived together is when you came over here for 'Road to Hong Kong'. Did you get on well together?
We had a beautiful time. We had a lovely house out near Windsor, not far from Ascot. I got him to the races one time. He'd never been to the races, and we had a big tip from the property man on the set, who said: 'This horse can't lose Saturday at Ascot.' Its name was Midge. So I persuaded Hope to go to the races. He said: 'I never go to the races, I don't like the dust.' I said: 'Come on, you'll make a fortune on this horse.' I think he bet something like £50 on Midge; I bet something less than that. It was a big field and they were going a mile. The announcer just said: 'They're under starter's orders,' and a few moments later, he said: 'They're off' - all save seven. Seven horses were turned the wrong way, and one of them was Midge. Midge jumped the fence and got into the end field, and they chased her for half an hour. Of course, we lost our bet, and I never heard the end of that. He said: 'I'll never go racing again.' If he could have found the trainer, he would have killed him, I think.

So, compared to Bob Hope, Jack Benny was generous?
Oh yes, Hope's very snug. Phil Harris says that Hope is really not tight, it is just that he's got low pockets and very short arms.

When did you and Hope get together as an act?
We were in vaudeville together, and once, at the Capitol Theatre, we took out a couple of girls who were in the show, and he later married one of them, Dolores, and then we saw a lot of one another. I got on the radio, and he went on the radio about that time. He started kidding me, I started kidding him; a little pseudo-feud developed, which columnists played up; that led to a picture, and so on.

He had the nose and you had the ears.
Yes, I had the ears. He said I looked like a taxi with both doors open.

Did you ever have to pin your ears back?
Oh yes, I did. Years ago, in pictures, they had a fixation about anybody's ears sticking out, and they used to pin mine back with glue, at the start of the day's shooting. Very uncomfortable - it itched back there, you know.

With Kitty Carlisle in She Loves Me Not. Ears pinned back.

One day, during a Technicolor picture, there were an awful lot of lights, the glue melted, and they popped out. I said: 'That's it! I'm going to leave them out,' and they never pinned them back again. It didn't match up with the scenes done earlier in the picture. In some of the scenes, I had the ears back, in some I had them out. Must have looked strange to anyone watching the movie.

You have been able to translate the kind of personality you put into your singing absolutely truly on to film.
It was very easy to do. I had good direction and good writing. As I've said, with the Jesuits, I had all that training in speaking, and then I was three or four years in vaudeville, and with Whiteman two or three years, and then back in vaudeville. We used to do five shows a day. The first show was at 11 o'clock in the morning in the State-Lake Theatre, Chicago. They called it the milkman's matinee. And with all that experience, you generally just develop.

Did you like life in Hollywood?
Yes, very much.

Yet you moved your second family to San Francisco. Why was that?
Well, San Francisco, by jet, is now only 50 minutes from Hollywood. I can leave the house at 8.30 and be on the set at NBC at 9.45, because I land at Burbank, right near the studio; I keep a wardrobe down there. So that is like people commuting in to London from Sunningdale or some place to go to work every day.

You like to spend a lot of time with your family, don't you?
Yes, we take breakfast together, and we always eat dinner at 6.30 with all the family. Unless there is a dinner party at the house - which may be twice a month - or unless we are going out to dinner - which may, again, be twice a month - we're always with the family. Up until recently, we travelled together all the time, even during the school periods, because Kathryn is a registered teacher and she would take their assignments with us and keep them up to date. For instance, we'd go to Mexico in April and May, and she would teach all their assignments for that period, and, when we came back, they would be certainly level with their class - maybe a little bit ahead, because they got personal attention.

I admire anybody who can do that. I can never do that with my children. You keep them on a tight rein?
Well, she's a teacher and she knows how to. In Mexico, she'd have school every day from 8.30 to 12.00, and then, in the afternoon, they could go swimming or fishing or do anything they wanted. She made great progress, because she had the three of them right there in front of her and they couldn't do anything else but work.

What does Nathaniel want to do?
He wants to be a golfer. I've never seen anybody as dedicated as he is. We were playing at Gleneagles, and any time we would miss him, he'd be out on the golf course. We couldn't find him one night. It must have been 11.30, and he was out there; there was a moon, and he was out practising putting on one of the greens. We went to the races at Goodwood on Saturday, and he hit practice balls from 8.00 in the morning till 6.00 that night - just hit them over one way, and then go and get them, and knock them back. And he is at it the next morning. He is a very good golfer; he has just won second place in the Pro-Am and the German Open in Bremen. He's got a 77 on his own ball, and he had a best ball of 63. That's the course where the pros had so much trouble: it is figured to be the longest, toughest course in Europe. He has had some real good rounds. He's only 13.

It would be a nice feather in your cap if Nathaniel were to win the Bing Crosby Open.
Wouldn't that be something! He wants to play next year. I don't know whether we can have a 14-year-old down there or not. But he's a good enough player to play in it. You see, we play with a professional partner, and I would hate to have him go down there and play miserably, and cost the professional a lot of money. Because I don't think the professional would be enchanted with the idea of playing with Nathaniel Crosby just for the glory, unless he got some loot along with it.

What about your daughter?
She's quite a girl - very active in the ballet. She's studying drama this year at the University of Texas. She seems to have a faculty that you rarely see, and it's hard to put your finger on just what it is. If you see her round the house, she's a perfectly normal, everyday little girl, but if she steps in front of a camera on stage, something magical happens to her personality. She starts to give off sparks, and you realise that there is something there that isn't perceptible on the surface, until she starts to work a real line. It's a kind of a glow.

How have you been able to keep the voice as good as it is?
I don't think it is all that good any more. I listen to some of the old records, and they sound a lot better than what I do now.

Do you do any exercises for your voice?
I should, but I forget to do them. But it's good if you can do that, vocalising it. Nowadays, if I've got a record session coming up, I do some vocalising for an hour a day for two or three days, and I find, when I arrive at the record session, I sound better. I didn't used to do that. I used to arrive very badly equipped, very badly trained, and some of the records sound like it.

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entires. Please send all advertisements to the Editor.

Gord Atkinson 715-2018 Robertson Rd., Nepean, Ottawa, ON, K2H 1C6, Canada.

Gord's latest book "The Golden Years of Entertainment" is available to Crosby collectors for $20.00 US or Canadian funds or equivalent in British pounds. Write to Gord direct.

John Bassett "Bingville", 15 Oast Way, Rochford, Essex SS4 1RZ, UK

STILL WANTED: The following UK 7" vinyl records are required in good condition. Please state prices and postage costs.

Brunswick 45rpm singles: 45-05244, 45-05269

MGM 45rpm EP: ES 3515 "Bing and Satchmo" – Stereo issue only.

Michael Crampton details on inside front cover.

Michael still has copies of "The Definitive Bing Crosby Discography" by Wig Wiggins and Jim Reilly. £10 + postage (£3 in UK, £11.65 worldwide). Proceeds will go to the ICC funds.

Dr Mark Gretason
Email: drmarkgretason@yahoo.co.uk

I have discovered that my late father who died in 1989 (Sandy McMahon) appeared in the days of VHS in a Bing Crosby tribute band on the Dave Lee Travis TV show. It is thought the date is somewhere between 1982-5. DLT and the BBC have not retained a copy. His nephew recorded the item but the VHS it was recorded on was subsequently recorded over so the material was lost. Do any of your members have a copy? Many thanks for your help.

(Editor: I don't remember this at all. Does anyone have a recollection of the Bing Crosby Tribute Band?)

Michael Reynolds
41 Naples Drive, Westlands, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 2QD, UK
Email: michaeljohnreynolds@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: 01782 618995

Michael's father was Fred Reynolds who made major contributions to Crosbyana over many years. Michael still has copies of Fred's wonderful books "The Crosby Collection". He would like to sell the following with half of the proceeds going to the ICC.

Vol. 2 - (1935-1941) 281 recordings, 247 pages £5
Vol. 3 - (1942-1950) 436 recordings, 317 pages £6
Vol. 4 - (1951-1960) 519 recordings, 382 pages £8
Vol. 5 - (1961-1977) 359 recordings, 358 pages £8

Purchasing three or more secures the bonus of a hardback detective story (184 pages – non Bing, solvable by the reader) by Fred. This book can also be purchased for £3. Postage and packing is to be charged at an additional £3 per volume in the UK unless they work out at less for quantity, which would be advised if applicable. Payment can be made by PayPal if desired.

Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society
Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia (tel. [03] 9755 3013 – email: deryk@net2000.com.au)

Bi-monthly newsletters are issued by the Society and they can now be received in PDF form by email if desired. The regular film nights continue and in August a film of the 2016 Broadway adaptation of "Holiday Inn" was shown supported by a compilation of clips featuring Bing and Andy Williams. The October film was "The Country Girl" plus the Sennett short "One More Chance". The remaining film night for this year will be held on Dec. 10 at the Library behind the Collingwood Town Hall complex at 11 Stanton St., Abbotsford, Melbourne.

Internet Sites

BING magazine

This contains a considerable amount of reference material all of which is being updated as new information arises.

See **www.bingmagazine.co.uk**

Crosby Fan World

This bulletin board type site is at:

http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/

Mature and knowledgeable contributions are being made and the site is sensibly moderated by Richard Baker.

Other sites well worth a visit are:

www.BingCrosby.com - run by Bing Crosby Enterprises

Bing Crosby on Facebook - run by Bing Crosby Enterprises

Bing Crosby House (on Facebook)

Bing Crosby on Twitter - @Bingconstantly and @Bing_Crosby are the links. On Instagram, please follow 'bingsings'.

Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby—"Der Bingle"--The Bing Crosby Fan Page – a Facebook group.

The Early Bing Crosby 1926-1936 a Facebook group administered by Mike Pearl

Bing Crosby Appreciation Group – run by Gary Rise on Facebook

Jon Oye's Blog – run by ICC stalwart Jon Oye.
Go to: **http://derbingle.blogspot.com/**

The Bing Crosby News Archive - David Lobosco runs this blog at **http://bingfan03.blogspot.co.uk/**

Steven Lewis' Bing Crosby Internet Museum
See **http://www.stevenlewis.info/crosby/**

Other Appreciation Societies

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, **www.flias.com**
c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK
Tel /Fax 01723 863022 Email: tony@flias.com
A magazine called *Laine Lines* is published three times a year.

International Al Jolson Society
www.jolson.org *(Also on Facebook)*
c/o Sandra K. Gerloff, 419 Glenwood Drive, Douglassville, PA 19518, USA. A different Jolson radio show can be heard via the web site each week.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK
Tel: 01924 401909 Email: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com

Memory Lane
www.memorylane.org.uk
P. O. Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England

The acclaimed quarterly magazine for lovers of 1920s, 1930s and 1940s music. A "must" for 78 RPM collectors. Initial annual subscription only £10 (UK) or £15 (overseas) for readers of BING magazine. (Normal price £16 - UK, £22 - overseas.)

Sinatra Music Society
www.sinatramusicsociety.com
Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK
Tel: 01543-899771

The Society was founded in 1955. A quarterly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the UK are £15 a year; £19 for European membership and £23 for the rest of the world.

Books 'n' Bing

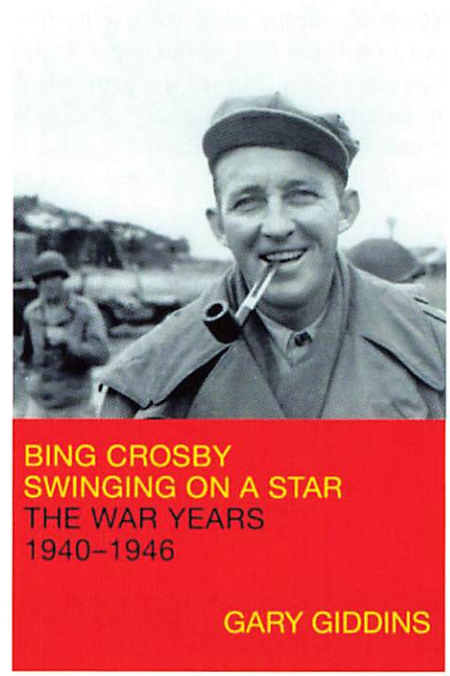
Bing Crosby – Swinging on a Star The War Years 1940-1946

By Gary Giddins ISBN 9 780316 887922

We continue to receive appraisals of this wonderful book and I do hope all of you have a purchased a copy by now. Just in case there is anyone who has not got the book, here is a review that appeared in the summer issue of *Memory Lane* (see above). Our grateful thanks to *Memory Lane* and to Barry McCanna for allowing us to reproduce the article here.

Giddins' first volume of the Bing biography, "A Pocketful of Dreams", appeared in 2001, took just under 600 pages to span 40 years, and garnered numerous awards. In 2001 Kathryn Crosby granted him virtual access to Bing's archives, so although this second volume covers only seven years, it's as lengthy as the first. Its size is mute testament to the volume and complexity of Bing's activities.

The Petrillo ban affected his freedom to record, and the choice of material had to be tailored to circumvent it. He was lucky in that Decca settled early, and its founder Jack Kapp shrewdly broadened Bing's repertoire to increase his appeal to the record-buying public.



His role as the genial host of the live Kraft Music Hall radio show became increasingly burdensome, and he eventually freed himself of that yoke in the process forcing the industry to accept pre-recording. The Road movies stereotyped him as Bob Hope's comedy partner, but director Leo McCarey (who gets a chapter all to himself) recast him in the persona of Father O'Malley, which solidified his public image, and elevated him to the rank of a serious actor. The account of his various films is studded with examples of the censorship then prevalent, not least during *The Road to Morocco* where guidelines included the warning "keep away from eunuchs".

Once America entered the war Bing devoted himself whole-heartedly to that cause. He criss-crossed the country to raise enormous sums of money for War Bonds, by way of concerts, appeals and charity golf matches, often in tandem with his on-screen partner Bob Hope. En route he visited hospitals and entertained wounded servicemen. His commitment ran deep, and as soon as he was able he joined a troopship to England, sharing the discomforts involved. There he toured the camps with fellow performers, then crossed to the French combat zone, often entertaining near the front line. He was planning a Far East tour when the war ended abruptly with

Japan's surrender. It was reckoned subsequently that overall he had covered some fifty thousand miles in the process.

What emerges from the extraordinary detail Giddins has amassed is as coherent a picture of Bing as we are likely to get. Various episodes (including the final chapter about his relationship with the Barsa sisters, who stalked him) highlight the contrast between his easygoing demeanour in his public roles, and the ways in which he sought to maintain his anonymity when "off duty". Despite his casual air he was scrupulous about rehearsals and punctuality, but cautious about publicity, careful to mask the various conflicts he was seeking to resolve, not least of which was his marriage. Bing was pre-eminent as a popular entertainer, but biographies have been thin on the ground, and what there were failed to do him justice. Giddins remedied that situation, and this magnificent second volume sets the seal on his endeavour. I hope he can complete the trilogy.

Barry McCanna

(Editor: Barry McCanna is a long-standing contributor to Memory Lane, and has his own Facebook page, The Jazz & Dance Band CD Round-Up.

Incidentally, those of you on Facebook should also take a look at Gary Giddins' Facebook page. Often extracts from the book are given plus links to appropriately related songs.)

A Second Sequel to Going My Way

Martin McQuade has been doing some more research.

Leo McCarey's *My Son John*, a Paramount release from 1952, chronicles the anguish a Catholic husband and wife endure when they discover that their son has Communist loyalties. Dean Jagger, Helen Hayes and Robert Walker portray the tortured nuclear family living in a small town in post-war America. Frank McHugh is the priest from whom the parents seek solace. This cleric's name is Father O'Dowd. Could it be that McCarey intended this character to be the same Father O'Dowd who, 8 years earlier, was Father O'Malley's colleague in his *Going My Way*? McHugh's characterizations in both films are amazingly similar. Perhaps O'Dowd's stint in the parish depicted in *My Son John* followed a possibly untenable assignment overseeing the irascible Father Fitzgibbons, which he mentions at the conclusion of *Going My Way*. *My Son John* has a connection to another McCarey/Crosby film. In 1951, McCarey had directed *You Can Change the World* for The Christophers' Organization. Bing appears with Bob Hope, Jack Benny, William Holden, Loretta Young and Irene Dunne and sings "Early American" in this short subject that extolls American values under attack from behind The Iron Curtain.

What a Swell Party!

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WITH DAN FURMAN ON PIANO

On Sunday, August 18, 2019 yours truly, with pianist Dan Furman, paid tribute to Cole Porter at The South Brooklyn Foundry. Every selection from High Society (sans "High Society Calypso") was on the bill, as well as every Porter song that Bing recorded.

Another Fleeting Glance

PT 109 chronicles Commander John F. Kennedy's heroic exploits in the Pacific. There is an early scene in this 1963 Warner Brothers film that Leslie Martinson directed in which Kennedy, portrayed by Cliff Robertson, arrives at the area where the PT boats are under repair. He is amused as he comes upon a gruff sailor admonishing his underlings who are fastidiously affixing a coating to a battered craft while singing "99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall." "Hey, you Bing Crosbys, paint! Slop it on. This ain't no movie star's bedroom. Let's get this boat out of here." Incidentally, Kennedy stayed at Bing's Palm Springs compound in March, 1962. This visit was a topic of discussion in the Fox News special, Scandalous: *The Death of Marilyn Monroe*," broadcast in August.

PC-Crosby Style

"Galway Bay - The Mystery Man Who Wrote the Classic Song" appeared on *The Irish Central* website on August 27, 2019. The article makes this intriguing claim. "[The composer Arthur] Colahan never knew Bing Crosby changed his lyrics from "speak a language that the English do not know" to "speak a language that the strangers do not know" because Crosby did not want the song to be too political, according to www.songplaces.com." The essay is available at:

https://www.irishcentral.com/culture/entertainment/galway-bay-mystery-man-classic-song

A Christmas Fashion Plate

Edelweiss Patterns Blog, devoted to "vintage dresses and Von Trapp trivia," posted an article by Katrina Casey Holte on December 17, 2011 entitled "Kathryn Crosby and Her Lovely Christmas Dresses." Several color photos from *The Hollywood Palace* illustrate the piece.

Here is the full text at: **http://www.edelweisspatterns.com/blog/?p=1524.**

For many of us, Christmas just wouldn't be Christmas without the sound of Bing Crosby's crooning brightening our homes as we decorate for the holidays. Bing's name is almost synonymous with family Christmas celebrations, both for his records and Christmas films, not to mention

his Christmas shows! But it is that last venue, his yearly Christmas shows, that brings us to his lovely wife ***Kathryn Crosby and her fabulous holiday dresses****! The annual Bing Crosby Christmas Show aired during the 1960s and 70s when he was often joined by his wife and children for a truly family-friendly Christmas program.*

His young wife Kathryn, along with their daughter Mary Frances and sons Harry and Nathaniel, were part of the much looked-forward to television broadcast. To add to the festivity of the occasion, Kathryn and her daughter always wore matching mother-daughter outfits, which were usually elegant floor-length gowns. These ensembles conveyed the holiday cheer with rich colors and luxurious fabrics, all the while maintaining a sense of prestige and modesty as "Mrs. Bing Crosby".

In a 1972 magazine interview, Kathryn Crosby and her wardrobe were described in this way: "Kathryn Crosby is, at age 37, a fashion plate who wears only Jean Louis custom-made clothes, but fashion isn't her only interest. 'Bing likes just below-the-knee hemlines – period,' says his wife, the former Texas-bred actress, Kathryn Grant, a Methodist-turned-Catholic who describes Bing as 'a former priest who got married.' 'My husband wants our daughter, Mary Frances, to wear below-the-knee skirts, too…'"

I do wonder why he appeared in so many Hollywood movies if he really held this conviction about dressing modestly, but perhaps it was just a "later-in-life" principle he adopted – after all, Bing was old enough to be a grandfather by the time he raised this family! Bing Crosby had first met ***Kathryn Grant*** *during the filming of the movie "White Christmas" in 1954, where she was helping with the wardrobe department during her interim between film jobs. This vivacious brunette with the soft Texan accent was over 30 years his junior! But despite the vast age difference and the subsequent teasing they endured for it, the couple were married in 1957 in what I assume was not a vastly publicized wedding, as there are no remaining photographs of the occasion. Together they had a happy family and a marriage that lasted for twenty years until Bing's death in 1977. And while his family will never be the same without him, the musical legacy he left behind continues to delight his listeners all over the world. What better time to turn on some old Bing Crosby music than during Christmas?*

Martin McQuade

Old Clippings

Most of you will be familiar with your Editor's book "Bing Crosby – Day by Day" which was published by Scarecrow Press in 2001. It completely sold out and eventually I uploaded the contents to the BING magazine web site where it can now be accessed by anyone interested in Bing's life and career.

When I was researching the book in the 1990s, if you wanted to look at old newspapers you had to go to libraries and I spent countless hours at the Manchester Central Library pouring over microfilm copies of *The New York Times.* Also I made a number of visits to the Newspaper Archive in Colindale in London, often with Lionel Pairpoint, spinning through microfilm examining old copies of *Variety*. I gradually began to get an idea of Bing's activities through the years and during our many holidays in the USA in the 1990s I made a point of visiting libraries in some of the cities where Bing had entertained or had a connection. Occasionally a library would maintain clipping files of celebrities and if there was one for Bing it was a huge bonus. Usually though it was a case of looking at microfiche covering the dates when Bing had been there.

Now of course many newspapers have placed copies of their old papers on the Internet and it is an easy matter, for a fee, to quickly search against Bing for specific dates. Over the years, I have been updating my "Day by Day" book on the BING magazine web site as new information arises and recently I thought I would have another look at Bing's early life in Spokane in case any more newspapers had been added. I was keen to put a date to Bing's early performance of "What D'ye Mean You Lost Yer Dog?" (Aka "I've Got a Dog Named Rover") which he described in his Palladium concert. Also I wanted to nail down the date of Bing's success at a swimming gala when he picked up seven medals.

The Crosbys moved to Spokane in 1906 and the first references seen in the papers are to Bing's dad, Mr. H.L. Crosby, as he applies for various liquor licenses for saloons on behalf of his employer, the Inland Brewery in 1907. Bing's mother pops up now and again in activities involving St. Aloysius Church and you may like to know that she was one of those involved in running the tea room at church bazaars in May, 1912. On May 7 that year, Bing's father was involved in "a complete Bingville gathering at the country store" at St. Aloysius Hall. This appears to have been a skit based on the newspaper cartoon which gave Bing his name.

In September 12, 1912, Mr. Crosby was elected as a precinct committee member for the Eureka ward in the Fifth precinct to represent the Republican Party. In 1914, we can spot Mrs. Crosby reading a prepared paper at the Woman's Book Club. That year she was a chaperone at a dancing party at Natatorium Park when Larry Crosby (then aged 19!) was one of those attending. Father reappears on October 8, 1914 when the men of St. Aloysius Parish Club gave a card party for the ladies. Mr. Crosby was one of those acting as a waiter.

All very well, but where is Bing (or Harry as he was usually called then)? Well, on January 4, 1913, young Harry at the age of 9, attended the 11th birthday party of Bessie McGowan at E511 Boone Avenue, Spokane. Frank Corkery was there too and as Father Corkery he later became President of Gonzaga University. It must have been a slow news day though and another similar occasion was on March 7, 1914, when Harry at the age of 10, attended Rachel Davis's party at E714 Baldwin Avenue, Spokane. The paper says, "the hours were spent socially and refreshments were served at 4 o'clock."

Bing's father must have been a member of The Elks because at the annual picnic at Liberty Lake for Elks and their families on July 23, 1915, young Harry (aged 12) distinguished himself by winning the pie eating competition for boys. Not something Bing mentioned in later years! Apart from the Elks, Bing's father was also a member of the Catholic Order of Foresters.

The year 1917 was when Bing burst on the scene. The USA entered WW1 on April 6, 1917 and prior to that date there had been anger directed towards Germany as it was torpedoing American merchant ships taking supplies to England and also Germany was trying to form an alliance with Mexico to help that country regain territories lost in the Mexican-American war. On April 3, 1917, the Spokane Chamber of Commerce held its weekly luncheon and a resolution was passed supporting President Woodrow Wilson's wish to enter the war. Then:

> *"Harry Crosby, boy soprano, stood on a chair and sang "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," while the crowd stood and everybody joined in the chorus. Flags over the Speakers' table and at both ends of the room added to the enthusiasm."*

On April 27, Bing repeated the song as part of the Grand Finale of the "Dance Extravaganza" at the Auditorium. This was a benefit for the Women's Auxiliary of the National Guards of Spokane.

> *Harry Crosby sang "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean" as the children, their arms full of posies and waving American flags, massed in front of the stage for the last scene.*
>
> *(The Semi-Weekly Spokesman-Review, April 28, 1917)*

No sign of "What D'ye Mean You Lost Yer Dog?" but on July 4, 1917, Bing's swimming prowess was revealed. He took part in the City Playgrounds Championship swimming meet at the Sinto plunge in Spokane and in the Junior (class 3) section, he won the 25-yard breast, 25-yard back, the diving, and came second in the 25-yard dash, the 50-yard dash and the high point. Not satisfied with this, some weeks later on August 20, he took three first places and two second places to win the open amateur swimming meet at the Sinto pool. He scored 21 points.

CROSBY HIGH MAN IN SWIMMING MEET

Sinto Contest Graded on Form — Miss Farrow Takes Second.

Harry Crosby, by taking three firsts and two second places, won the open amateur form swimming meet Monday at the Sinto pool. He scored 21 points.

Miss Marion Farrow captured second place with 10 points, finishing first in the breast stroke and side underarm. The summary:

Breast stroke—Marian Farrow, girl; Harry Crosby, Barton Bean.

Back stroke—Harry Crosby, Glen Taylor, Barton Bean.

Side underarm—Marian Farrow, Kent Addis, Ted Rathausen.

English overarm—Harry Crosby, Glen Taylor, Barton Bean.

Trudgeon—Kent Addis, Harry Crosby, Glen Taylor.

Crawl—Harry Crosby, Barton Bean, Glen Taylor.

By now, he was at Gonzaga High School and on December 23, he sang a solo at both masses at St. Aloysius. He was the captain of the "Dreadnaughts" football team in the Junior Yard Association Midget League.

Some of the details of Bing's activity in the following years were already known to us and will not be repeated here as they can be found on the BING magazine web site. On April 2, 1920, a photograph of the Gonzaga J.Y.A Basketball team (which included Bing) appeared in the Spokane Chronicle. The team had won 12 of its 14 games. His elocution and drama activities started to come to the fore and also on May 6, 1922, he sang several songs at the East Side Improvement Club meeting at the Stevens school, accompanied on the piano by his sister Catherine. He was selected to attend a 4-week military training camp at Camp Lewis in July 1922 but it is not clear whether he actually did so.

In 1924 he joined the Musicaladers and they were soon receiving some useful publicity.

"MUSICALADERS" GAIN POPULARITY

> The "Musicaladers," one of Spokane's new orchestras, is fast gaining popularity among the dance enthusiasts of the city and are playing for many dances given by the younger set. Composed entirely of high school and college men, the orchestra has gained a great following, particularly among the high school set. The orchestra is composed of Alton Rinker, pianist and leader: Miles Rinker, saxophone and clarinet:

James Heaton, trumpet: Harry Crosby, traps: Claire Pritchard, banjo, and Robert Pritchard, saxophone and clarinet.
(*Spokane Chronicle, January 30, 1924*)

The Musicaladers – l to r in striped blazers, Bob Pritchard, Clare Pritchard, Bing: in dark suits, Al Rinker, Miles Rinker.

During the summer of 1924 The Musicaladers played at Lareida's Dance Pavilion at E4902 Sprague, Dishman, receiving $25 for three nights a week. Bing had dropped out of University by then and had taken a temporary job as a clerk with the Great Northern Railway. On August 12, 150 employees of the Great Northern Railway attended a picnic at Coeur d'Alene and took part in an athletic program in the hot sun.

> *Harry Crosby of the legal department, was high point winner for men. He took first place in the hat race and 50-yard swim.*
>
> *(Spokane Chronicle, August 13, 1924)*

In 1925, Bing and Al Rinker began entertaining at the Clemmer Theatre but there was still an involvement at Lareida's Dance Pavilion. In April, the Musicaladers commenced another run there entertaining each Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday night. Jimmy Heaton and Miles Rinker appear to have left the group by then and they were advertised as the Lareida Orchestra. Also "Al Rinker's Lareida's Orchestra" was advertised to play there in June 1925. Increasingly though, it was the work at the Clemmer which was becoming more important.

Something I had not realised was that Bing was already into golf in 1925. On August 9, Bing (handicap 15) played in the Ware Brothers annual golf tournament at the Downriver course and had a net 147 for the 36 holes. He then qualified for the City Golf Championship but was knocked out in the second round.

But show business called and after several successful months at the Clemmer, Bing and Al left Spokane to seek their fortune in California.

Moving ahead to November 1956 and something completely different, I was amused to see Bing's tongue-in-cheek comments about Elvis Presley in this clipping.

> In a recorded interview on "The Millie Considine Show" (Mutual Network, 12:15 p. m., weekdays) Bing Crosby publicly expresses for the first time his opinion of Elvis Presley.
>
> Presley is a "really good singer—carries a tune quite well," says Crosby. But he claims that Presley "could be even more successful" if he (1) dresses better, (2) Gets a decent haircut, (3) Shaves off those sideburns, and (4) "Stops that wriggling."
>
> "As a matter of fact," adds Crosby, "I've got some extra sports jackets, and I'll let him have them—just to show him how good he can look on stage."

Elvis in one of Bing's sports jackets! The mind boggles!

Malcolm Macfarlane

How the West Was Won

The Crosby album "How the West Was Won" has special memories for your Editor and Jeremy Rose has taken a close look at it.

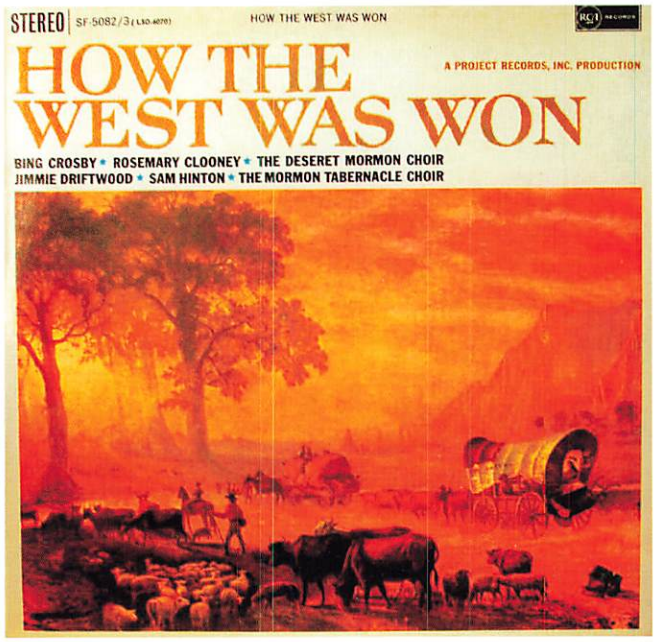
Between April 6th and May 18th 1959, the American magazine *Life* published a series of seven themed historical articles under the overall title of *How The West Was Won*. By July 20th of that same year, Bing was in the United Recorders studio in Hollywood recording an album of the same name for his own Project Records company. The story of how Bing's album came into being, and his involvement in the gestation of the subsequent 1962 Cinerama epic movie has made for one of the most satisfying research projects I have yet undertaken for *BING* magazine.

The articles were written by staff writers from *Life* (among whom was the first female columnist employed by the magazine, the celebrated journalist Shana Alexander - then at the very start of her career) and were profusely illustrated with contemporary paintings, photographs, period newspaper cuttings, maps, diaries and documents.

It would appear that Bing saw the potential for an album of period songs and arrangements based on the series, because he acquired the rights to both the articles and the overall title. Exactly when this acquisition took place

is unclear, but *How The West Was Won (HTWWW)* was the first recording produced by Bing's newly-formed Project Records Inc. Project Records had only been established in early May 1959, while the articles were still appearing in *Life*, so I think it's reasonable to assume that the rights were acquired around the same time. Project's president was the arranger/conductor Simon Rady and Bing's rôle within the company was - pace Sinatra - Chairman of the Board!

Simon Rady is probably best remembered today for his lush orchestral and vocal arrangements exploiting the Stereo Hi-Fi craze of the late '50s and early '60s. (His 1961 album *Voices in Motion* has long been an easy-listening favourite of mine.) *HTWWW* was "conceived and supervised" by Rady, but the arranging and conducting duties were assigned to Bob Thompson, who would later provide the orchestral arrangements for Bing's 1960 album *Holiday in Europe*.


STEREO
HOW THE WEST WAS WON
HOW THE WEST WAS WON
A PROJECT RECORDS, INC. PRODUCTION
BING CROSBY • ROSEMARY CLOONEY • THE DESERET MORMON CHOIR
JIMMIE DRIFTWOOD • SAM HINTON • THE MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR

Working with folk song specialists Alan Lomax and Sam Hinton, Rady selected songs and narrative passages specific to the periods covered by the various articles. (Hinton also appears as a vocalist on the album). 43 separate items appear on *HTWWW*, with Bing either singing or narrating on 20 of them. The other musical performers who appear on the album are Rosemary Clooney, The Jack Halloran Singers, The Tarrytown Trio, Sam Hinton, Jimmie Driftwood, The Deseret Mormon Choir and The Salt Lake Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

I think it's safe to assume that for anyone reading this article, Ms Clooney will need no introduction! I will, however, give very brief biographical details of the rest of the musical line-up.

Jack Halloran (1916-1997) was an American composer and choral director. He was musical director on Bing's 1959 album *Join Bing and Sing Along*, which was recorded a few months after *HTWWW*. He also directed his eponymous singers on Bing's albums, *I Wish You a Merry Christmas*, *On the Happy Side* and *A Time to Be Jolly*.

As far as I can ascertain, The Tarrytown Trio originated in Santa Barbara, California, and merely used the name "Tarrytown", which is a village in Westchester County, New York State. They later became The Floyd County Boys and celebrated their fiftieth anniversary of performing under that name in 2015.

Sam Hinton (1917-2009) was a folk singer and harmonica player who pursued a parallel career as a marine biologist, eventually teaching at the University of California, San Diego. As well as releasing several albums of folk music, on 25th March 1947, Hinton recorded 56 traditional Western songs for inclusion in The Library of Congress recorded archive. (It's interesting to note that several of the songs in that Library of Congress session were chosen for inclusion on *HTWWW* - in newly-recorded versions, of course...)

James Corbitt Morris (1907-1998), known professionally as Jimmie Driftwood, was an American folk music composer and musician. He was a prolific songwriter, and 1959 - the year of *HTWWW* - saw no fewer than six of his compositions in the popular and country music charts. His vocal contributions to *HTWWW*, however, consist of exclusively traditional material, although he did write the only "new" song on the album - "Buckskin Joe" - sung by Bing.

I'm afraid I've drawn a bit of a blank differentiating between the two choirs which share the final three tracks of the album - The Deseret Mormon Choir and The Salt Lake Mormon Tabernacle Choir. (Confusingly, some releases of the album refer to "The Mormon Tabernacle Choir"; others to "The Salt Lake Mormon Tabernacle Choir".) The world-famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir was itself re-named last year and will henceforth be known as The Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square. The 360-strong choir was established in 1847 by the founding fathers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints - The Mormons.

"Deseret" was the name of a provisional US State, proposed in 1849 by the original Mormon settlers, encompassing vast swathes of modern-day Utah, Nevada, California, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming, Idaho and Oregon. The provisional state was never recognised by the US Government. The name derives from the word for "honeybee" in The Book of Mormon.

The album is divided into nine sections as follows:

Exploring The Wild New Land, Travellers of the Great Plains, Ranchers and Indian Raiders, The Great Gold Rush Days, The Railroads, Desperadoes, Settlers and Civilization, Cowboys - The Last Frontiersmen and The Mormons.

This is apparently a different order to that in which the articles were originally published, and was presumably changed in order to give more of a "flow" to the sequence of musical numbers and narration.

Side One

Exploring the Wild New Land

Shenandoah - Chorus & orchestra
Extract from Carl Sandburg - Bing
Bound for the Promised Land - Bing & Rosemary Clooney
En Roulant Ma Boule Roulant - Bing & Jack Halloran Singers
Lupita Divina - Bing & The Tarrytown Trio
The Sioux Indians - Sam Hinton
Extract from Carl Sandburg / Shenandoah - Bing

Travellers of the Great Plains

Crossing the Plains - Bing & Rosemary Clooney
Buffalo Boy - Sam Hinton
Sweet Betsy from Pike - Rosemary Clooney
Ox Driving Song - Jimmie Driftwood
Will You Go Out West with Me - Sam Hinton

Side Two

Ranchers and Indian Raiders

Buffalo Gals - Bing & Rosemary Clooney
General Custer - Jimmie Driftwood
All 'Pewtrified' (narration) - Bing
Will You Come to the Bower? - Bing
Bile Them Cabbage Down - Sam Hinton
Green Grow the Lilacs - Bing & Rosemary Clooney

The Great Gold Rush Days

A Ripping Trip - Sam Hinton
What Was Your Name in the States - Jimmie Driftwood
California Ball - Rosemary Clooney
When I Went Off to Prospect – Bing
Lane County Bachelor - Sam Hinton
Old Settler's Song (Acres of Clams) – Bing

Side Three

The Railroads

Drill, Ye Tarriers, Drill - Jack Halloran Singers
A Railroader's Bride I'll Be - Rosemary Clooney
Nine Hundred Miles – Bing

Desperadoes

Billy the Kid - Jimmie Driftwood
Hang Me, Oh Hang Me! – Bing
Jesse James - Jimmie Driftwood

Settlers and Civilization

Skip to My Lou - Bing & Rosemary Clooney
Crawdad Song - The Tarrytown Trio
Careless Love - Rosemary Clooney
Hell in Texas - Sam Hinton
Jennie Jenkins - Bing & Rosemary Clooney

Side Four

Cowboys - The Last Frontiersmen

Streets of Laredo - Bing
Down by the Brazos - Sam Hinton
Git Along, Little Dogies – Bing
Buckskin Joe - Bing
Red River Valley – Bing

The Mormons

The Handcart Song - The Deseret Mormon Choir
The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning - The Deseret Mormon Choir
Come, Come, Ye Saints - The Salt Lake Mormon Tabernacle Choir

As previously mentioned, Bing is heard on 20 of the 43 tracks, both as singer and narrator. Rather than attempt a track-by-track analysis of Bing's contributions (a task meticulously carried out by Fred Reynolds in *The Crosby Collection*) I thought I would give an overview of how I think *HTWWW* works as a "concept" album before focusing on a few aspects of Bing's approach to the material.

From the obvious care taken in the selection of material for the album, and the use of contributing musicians who were specialists in the field of the music of the era, through to the very high production values afforded the project, I think it's clear that the producers of *HTWWW* set out to produce an historically authentic complement to the original series of *Life* articles. On the whole I think they succeeded magnificently, although I have one fairly major personal reservation which I will discuss later.

In the relevant volume of *The Crosby Collection*, Fred Reynolds gives the recording dates as 20th, 21st, 23rd and 24th July, 1959. I would imagine that these four days were given over to recording all the tracks involving Bing, Rosie, The Tarrytown Trio, The Jack Halloran Singers and Bob Thompson and the Orchestra, with the other soloists and ensembles recording their contributions at separate sessions.

The album was recorded by RCA using their *Living Stereo* process, which certainly gives a wonderfully wide sound-stage, particularly in the large choral numbers. The stereo process is used to the full, and could be said to be the aural equivalent of *Cinerama*, which is appropriate given the development of the HTWWW story following the release of the album in 1960. Again, more of that later...

The album opens with a bold, big-boned version of *Shenandoah*, scored for The Jack Halloran Singers and the lower brass instruments of Bob Thompson's orchestra. As they are throughout *HTWWW*, the male singers of the chorus are very much to the fore in the recording balance. This is followed by a lone banjo plucking out the tune. This lone banjo sets out the *Living Stereo* credentials by moving across the stereo image from left-to-right before being joined by Bing, who recites an extract from a free-verse poem by the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and author, Carl Sandburg (1878-1967). The poem invites us to, "Look back..."

Bing and the combined orchestral and choral forces are then joined by Rosemary Clooney for a very spirited and uplifting version of the traditional, *Bound for the Promised Land*. This whole sequence makes for an extremely effective introduction to what is to come. The nearly 90-minute sequence of music and narration, when enjoyed in conjunction with the booklet notes, make for a unique musical experience quite unlike anything else in Bing's recorded canon.

The more I have listened to this album for the purposes of this article, the more I have been struck by Bing's artistry in what would at first glance seem to be a relatively straightforward "gig" for him. His

spoken narrative sections are sincere without being sentimental and in his singing he seems to put his voice entirely at the service of this traditional, home-spun music. There is an almost total absence of what we might call the "Crosby-isms" that we all know and love so much. No mordents, no interpolated syncopation, hardly any *portamento* sliding between notes...

Gary Giddins sums it up perfectly in Vol. 2 of his biography of Bing when - albeit in a different context - he speaks of Bing's, "...ability to sing a song almost exactly as written... and yet stamp his imprimatur on every note and syllable". Just listen to, "Will You Come to the Bower" or "Red River Valley" and I think you'll hear what he's talking about.

Singing with Rosemary Clooney.

I mentioned earlier that I have one serious personal reservation about the musical line-up on *HTWWW* and I'm very sorry to say that it's Rosemary Clooney. I am an enormous fan of Rosie's voice, but for some reason I'm afraid I find her contributions here somewhat jarring and out of place. She doesn't really do anything wrong, but almost exactly a year to the day before the *HTWWW* sessions, Bing and Rosie were in the same studios recording the joyous *Fancy Meeting You Here*, and I just feel that she's still in "Bing 'n' Rosie" mode here.

(I don't think this impression is helped by Rosie's picture in the album booklet, which is a *completely* incongruous shot of a pouting Rosie, clad in a pair of pink gingham pyjamas, curled up against a bale of hay!)

The album was released by RCA Victor in 1960 with the "Life" logo prominently displayed on the sleeve. Subsequent LP releases dispensed with the logo and also replaced the original cover art-work with a different image. The records were issued with automatic couplings. I.e., LOP 6070-1, sides 1 and 3; LOP 6070-2, sides 2 and 4.

The gatefold sleeve contained an illustrated 24-page booklet with abridged versions of the original articles so that listeners could gain a clearer impression of the historical context of what they were listening to.

Billboard magazine liked the album, saying, "This handsome set is sure to attract. The striking cover and informative booklet are perfect complements to the fine album contents which are interpreted by a stellar line-up of artists. The two-disk set offers a heap of Americana in narrative form. Strongest potential."

Bing's songs from the album were released on the privately-circulated CD, *Lillis, Love and a Little Covered Wagon*. (HLVCD-004)

In 2007 the complete album was re-released on CD by Bear Family Records (BCD-16634-AR), and it is this issue which has been my reference copy for this article.

At the time of writing, the Bear Family issue is still listed on their website (www.bear-family.de), and I have seen several copies on the UK eBay site, where there are also numerous copies of the various LP releases. I have only been able to find it on one "streaming" service - Qobuz at www.qobuz.com.

The release of the album was not, however, the end of Bing's association with what by now looked like becoming a *How the West Was Won* franchise. It should be remembered that Bing still owned the rights to both the title and the original series of articles, and an idea was now put forward to film a television special of *HTWWW* with Bing narrating and singing on actual Western locations. This proved to be too expensive and logistically complicated, so the package of articles and songs was offered to Cinerama Inc./MGM.

Up until this point, the wide-screen Cinerama process had been employed exclusively for documentaries and travelogues. Cinerama Inc. and MGM had, however, recently joined forces and were actively seeking a dramatic storyline to exploit the possibilities of the process. *HTWWW* must have seemed a perfect fit.

At this point, Bing sold on his rights to the series to Cinerama/MGM, and following the involvement of Hollywood actress Irene Dunne - like Bing a devout Roman Catholic - donated the resulting profits to a hospital in Santa Monica. Even so, Bing's name continued to be linked to the project. By now, the plan was to make a fully-fledged narrative saga covering the years 1839-1889, following the migration westward of successive generations of the same family - still narrated by Bing.

Increasing problems over casting for the movie - which MGM, with characteristic modesty, eventually billed as, "24 great stars in the mightiest adventure ever filmed" - meant that Spencer Tracy's original rôle

as General Grant was re-assigned to Henry (Harry) Morgan and Tracy became the narrator. At this point Bing withdrew from the project altogether.

It would have been a very satisfying squaring of the circle if Bing *had* been more involved in the movie, given that it seems clear that Bing and his producer at Project Records, Simon Rady, were the real impetus behind the original album.

I've found it extremely rewarding listening again to *How the West Was Won* in detail for the purposes of this article. The years following the end of Bing's exclusive Decca recording contract at the end of 1955 saw him continuing to explore and develop new and interesting work, with the years '58 - '61 producing - among others - *Fancy Meeting You Here, How The West Was Won, Bing and Satchmo* and *Holiday in Europe*. It could be argued, of course, that *HTWWW* is very much the odd one out in that list, but it's quite an achievement - in some ways a work of scholarship - and in my opinion represents a significant landmark in Bing's remarkable career.

As usual, I am indebted to the writers of the various Crosby reference books I have consulted whilst researching the background to *How the West Was Won*. I would also like to thank our editor for reminding me of an article in *BING* No. 160 which related details of Bing's involvement in the movie version.

Jeremy Rose

(Editor: Want to know what my special memories of the album are? In 1966, I passed my banking exams and my employer awarded me a gratuity of £100. I blew the lot on a stereogram to replace my cheap fidelity record player. The stereogram came with a demo record containing stereo effects of such things as trains passing from right to left etc. The first proper stereo record I bought was the "How the West Was Won" album and I was blown away by the sound and of course by the stereo effect. I was often to be found lying on my back on the floor with my head between the speakers listening to the album. All visitors were required to do the same including my father-in-law who particularly liked the Mormon choir tracks. Lovely memories.)

The Charioteers: From Gospel to Bing

Frans van der Kolff has been doing some research into a vocal group which worked with Bing for five years but is rarely remembered in our pages.

"In the 1940's, The Charioteers became the second-longest run by a [black] act on a 'major' program in radio history."

On reading this quote from Gary Giddins' marvelous biography on Bing, it becomes all the more surprising to learn that not much has been written about this black vocal group in the columns of our magazine. After all, Bing liked working with them and they stayed on his radio programme from the 1942 season onwards. And not just until he ended his relation with NBC and Kraft in 1946; they also appeared on and off on Bing's Philco Radio Time, until February 26th, 1947. When in a recent correspondence, Malcolm suggested an article about this group was long overdue, the decision to put pen to paper was easily made.

The Charioteers started out in 1930 as The Harmony Four, a vocal quartet founded by Howard Daniel, a young professor of music at Wilberforce University, Ohio. Later they changed their name to The Charioteers, which referred to a favourite song from the group's repertoire, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot". The group originally consisted of Wilfred 'Billy' Williams, tenor lead, and his fellow students Peter Leubens, second tenor, John Harewood, baritone, and their music teacher and bass singer Howard Daniel.

In the late nineteenth, early twentieth century universities, both black and white, found there was a mass audience for close harmony renditions of slavery-era spirituals. So university-linked choirs and small groups followed in the footsteps of the then pioneering (and still existing) Fisk Jubilee Singers, to promote their places of education. Some black universities rebelled against what they saw as the racist undertones of the 'old plantation songs' and Wilberforce University in Ohio, the oldest college for black people in the USA, banned the 'negro folk songs' outright. But by the late 1920's things were changing. Quartet singing in colleges had become a coast-to-coast craze. Every black college boasted a dozen or more amateur singing groups and local and regional contests between what had become known as 'jubilee' groups.

In 1980 Peter Grendysa, an American scholar and historian of R&B and rock 'n 'roll, conducted a series of interviews with Howard Daniel. A quote from these interviews gives us a first-hand insight in the first break for The Charioteers, after winning a quartet singing contest, which lead to radio work and eventually to a first recording contract with Decca Records (for two 78's) in 1935.

Howard Daniel remembers: "The school quartet was out of town and there was to be a state-wide

quartet contest in Columbus, given by the Knights of Columbus. The president of the school, Wilbert Jones, asked me if I could send my group up to Columbus [...]. So I took my group up there and we won the contest - they had about 28 quartets in the contest. This was in 1930 [sic]. We only knew two songs, "Steal Away to Jesus" and "Let the Church Roll On".

When you got up to Columbus you had to pick a number and I picked Number 13. You had to do a song on stage with the curtain up so the audience could see you. Then when it came time for your elimination number, they dropped the curtain and the audience couldn't see you. There was a white quartet that was just about four quartets ahead of us and, man, they sang "Steal Away" as their elimination number! So, we didn't know what to do and I said, 'Well, we'll just go on and sing our arrangement of it, that's all.' That's what we did and we won the contest. When we sang it there was a hush all over the audience. The recording we made later for Brunswick of that song is the same arrangement that won the contest."

Starting out with spirituals, the group expanded its repertoire to include a greater number of popular tunes. In 1935, having graduated from Wilberforce University, The Charioteers moved to New York where their radio work and later live performances brought them national popularity. For the next couple of years you could hear them on all three of America's major radio networks, CBS, Mutual and NBC, an achievement which was only matched by the biggest stars of that time. Although they got recording contracts with Vocalion, Brunswick and Decca, curiously enough they never really had a record hit. Yet their music remained in the record catalogues for longer periods of time and their popularity grew steadily.

In 1938 The Charioteers joined the cast of one of America's most successful musical reviews, Olsen & Johnson's *Hellzapoppin'*. *Hellzapoppin'* was a musical comedy with wild visual jokes, zany props, audience participation sequences, dirty quips, and never-ending gunshots. There was no plot and in fact no two performances were exactly alike. The show closed December 17th, 1941, after a total of 1404 performances. Following the close of *Hellzapoppin'* on Broadway, many in the cast including The Charioteers, went on the road with the show during 1942. The road shows continued in the same style of the Broadway production and, as some say, are at least in part reminiscent of the Road films.

How exactly Bing Crosby became aware of The Charioteers and their potential for his radio show has as far as I know - not been recorded for posterity. According to Howard Daniel, Bing saw The Charioteers performing in *Hellzapoppin'* and within two weeks after that they auditioned for the Kraft Music Hall. Initially, The Charioteers were hired for two weeks as a test. But after they had the studio audience roaring over their first song on their first Kraft programme, "Ride, Red, Ride", backed by their

talented pianist Jimmy Sherman, Bing wanted them for the year. That same show of October 1st, 1942, also featured another song by The Charioteers: "All I Need Is You".

"A 21-bell salute, please, Mr. Carpenter. Bing is back. Forsaking the golf course and the race track for the nonce, Mr. Crosby supplants brother Bob and again takes his place as the backbone and general raison d'être of the old KMH. The show is still same expert blend of music, comedy and guest stars and that inimitable spirited of good fellowship and effortless entertainment. In addition to the usual regulars, there are The Charioteers", writes Shirley Frohlich in *Billboard* of October 10th, 1942 about this first show of the 1942 season. She goes on to elaborate further.

> *"Added feature, the Charioteers, provides that something extra. These four Negro vocalists, with piano accompanist, are tops in four-part harmony. Their arrangements of Ride, Red, Ride and All I Need Is You, in the popular vernacular, are out of this world.*

So The Charioteers became regulars on his show during the 1942 season. They stayed with Bing on the radio throughout most of the next five years, performing with him for at least 54 times on KMH as well as on other radio programmes and War Bond rallies. It would be quite interesting to learn more about the audience reception of The Charioteers on Bing's shows. Lionel Pairpoint's excellent 'And Here's Bing: Bing Crosby - The Radio Directories' contains a detailed account of the show's weekly proceedings, including a selected choice of quotes from newspaper reviews. Alas, not much about The Charioteers is included - or, indeed, written.

Although The Charioteers did not make any commercial recordings with Bing due to the fact they were under contract to different record companies, they did perform on record, solo and with other artists, notably with both Mildred and Pearl Bailey and also

with Frank Sinatra. Their biggest hit with another artist was on Buddy Clark's top ten hit "Now Is the Hour" in 1948.

Having said this, Bing and The Charioteers did actually appear together on records. There are several V-Discs with either separate selections or recordings and/or rehearsals they made for KMH. For more information, I refer to the V-Disc listings which you can find via the home page of *BING* magazine.

Howard Daniel remembers the group's time with Bing, from the Peter Grendysa interviews: "We were with Bing Crosby when the war started, from October, 1942 until May 9, 1946 on the Kraft Music Hall. From 1941 to 1945 we were on the road quite a bit and busy with Bing, so we didn't get time to record [sic]. We used to do all the camp shows with Bing. We took a show to all the various camps in California like Pendleton and Young. Once a week we would visit the camps and entertain. We'd take a lot of stars with us, like Judy Garland, Bob Hope, and Dorothy Lamour. Bing would always send a station wagon down for me to take the boys in. A lot of performers would take the bus, but we used Bing's station wagon."

"Those AFRS shows used recordings and patched them together. After President Roosevelt died, they did a show for Mrs. Roosevelt from Hollywood with all the stars on it. That was taped and we sang a couple of spirituals on the show. It was sent to Mrs. Roosevelt's house. Bob Hope, Bing, Frank. Sinatra, everybody was on that thing. It's about six or eight double records - 12-inch 78's. It's beautifully bound - they had one made up for each of the performers on the show."

"Whenever we took our 13 weeks off, Bing had to stay on. While he was off, we had to stay on. During that time we had all the great artists on there as guest hosts, such as Eddy Duchin. After Bing left Kraft he went with Philco for a year and we went along with him. By then he was making too much money and he gave up show business for awhile - that's why we had to leave him."

That last statement startled me a bit. Despite alleged voice problems, widely reported in the press at the time, Bing never announced his retirement from show business in 1947, as far as I know. Although I must add that it is not only Mr. Daniels but also music journalist Tony Cummings who is referring to 'an erroneous retirement announcement by Bing' in this year in an article he wrote about The Charioteers in 2010. I do not know the exact reason why The Charioteers left Bing's Philco Radio Time. Somewhat surprising it is though, taking into account that by that time the vocal group style was becoming popular with post-war black teenagers who embraced a more personal style of vocalising with the lead vocalist more prominent, just as The Charioteers were doing.

In that same year 1947 The Charioteers accepted a long standing invitation to perform in England. Travelling on the Queen Mary they performed at the London Palladium. Due to a long term booking at New York's Paramount Theatre they were unable to capitalize on what was by all accounts a very successful run at the Palladium.

They had several recordings after the war which were received favourably, like "On the Boardwalk in Atlantic City" (1946), "Open the Door, Richard" (1947), "Chi-Baba, Chi-Baba" (1947), "What Did He Say?" (1948), and "A Kiss and a Rose" (1949). In 1947 the Charioteers were to record what was to become one of their biggest hits, a cover of "Ooh! Look A-There Ain't She Pretty", originally a hit for Buddy Greco. Astonishingly, this Charioteers' recording got a whole new lease of life in Britain in 2007 when Marks & Spencer used it to accompany the launch of their latest fashion collection, with Twiggy and others cavorting to its rolling beat.

After lead vocalist Billy Williams went solo in 1950, the rest of the Charioteers continued on. They went from record label to record label over the next seven years. However, they never regained the popularity they had when Billy Williams was part of the group. They continued to perform in concert and on radio and TV and worked until 1957 when Howard Daniel decided to retire the group.

Though they released 75 singles over 22 years and sang over five years with the biggest star in show business, The Charioteers never achieved the stardom of groups like The Ink Spots, The Mills Brothers and others. But what The Charioteers did achieve was connecting many of the elements of black church music with white pop entertainment and in doing so, and through their talent, showed both the opportunities and the difficulties in crossing over from religious to pop music.

Anyone interested in the music of The Charioteers is kindly directed to the usual (online) retailers, to the digital music services like Spotify and last but not least to YouTube, where you can find many recordings of The Charioteers (and even a video), free to enjoy without any charge.

'And Here's Bing: Bing Crosby - The Radio Directories' can be found on:
http://www.bingmagazine.co.uk/bingmagazine/author.htm

And 'Bing Crosby V-Disc listings' are available here:
http://www.bingmagazine.co.uk/

Frans van der Kolff

(Editor: Many thanks Frans for a lot of excellent research. One of the best albums in recent years of The Charioteers work was put together by Geoff Milne for Jasmine and it's very worthwhile acquiring. It's a 2-CD set titled "Swing Low, Sweet Charioteers").

Celluloid Crosby

David Lobosco goes back to 1953 for his look at Bing's movie career.

I had the pleasure of watching for the first time in over a decade Bing Crosby's tense drama *Little Boy Lost* (1953), and even though the film is dark, it brought back many memories of the movie for me. *Little Boy Lost* was one of the first Bing movies that I had on VHS in the mid-1980s. To capture the music, I did not have any records of the songs Bing recorded for the film, so I had to put a microphone up to the television speaker and record the songs that way. Wow, how things have changed in 30 years! Digging out my copy of the film, I have a 4th generation of the movie on DVD, so I had to search for a DVD player that would play it in the house. Some of my DVD players refused to even play the disc! However, I got the movie going, and the film is as amazing as I remember it being. The whole movie in general is sad, but in the end, there was hope and optimism.

The movie starts during the beginnings of World War II. Bing plays an American journalist who lives in Paris. He meets a beautiful radio performer (played by Nicole Maurey), and they fall in love, marry and have a little boy.

Singing The Darktown Strutters' Ball with Nicole Maurey.

Just as the boy is born, the Nazis invade Holland, and it is only a matter of time before France will fall. Bing tries to get his wife out of Paris, but she cannot travel for a few days following the difficult birth of their son. He is sent to make a broadcast from Lille but France quickly falls to the Nazis, and Bing is unable to return to Paris and his beautiful family. He is wounded and taken to a hospital in England. He still hears his wife on the radio, but one day her broadcasts abruptly stop. Bing later finds out that his beloved wife was murdered by the Nazis for being a part of the French resistance during the war.

As you can see this is no happy-go-lucky Bing Crosby film! Bing really never accepts that his wife is dead, but he begins his search for his son who was placed in an orphanage after his mother's murder. Bing goes to the orphanage where he meets the Mother Superior (played wonderfully by Gabrielle Dorziat), and she hesitates to get Bing's hopes up but lets Bing meet a boy that could be his son. His potential son was played by Christian Fourcade, making his American film debut and deserving an award for his striking portrayal of the boy. Bing is frustrated, because he cannot figure out if the boy is his son or not. Bing tries to stimulate the boy's mind by singing songs from when he was a baby, spraying the boy's mother's old perfume that she wore, and even going to the apartment where they all first lived at before the war tore them apart. At the apartment the boy amazingly remembers things, but he remembers things incorrectly. Bing goes on to learn that the boy was told why Bing was there, so the boy tells Bing what he wants to hear so he can be adopted. So Bing decides the boy is not his and returns him to the orphanage.

Meanwhile Bing's friend (played by Claude Dauphin), who knew Bing and his wife during the war years, finally makes Bing come to terms with his wife's death

by telling Bing of her final moments, which included being tortured and beaten by the Nazis before being shot. You can see Bing's character is tortured, and he has never recovered. When his wife was pregnant, she had had a nightmare where she saw a little boy all alone and heard shrieking. Bing brushes off the dream, but fast forward to the present time and Bing is all alone at the train station, a man without a direction or purpose, and he hears the shrieking of a train whistle which his wife had described from her nightmare. It is at that point that he had decided to move on and live his life. He had won a stuffed dog at a fair which was like one that his son had had called "Binky", and he had sent it to the orphanage in a parcel to give to the boy. *(SPOILER ALERT)* Hearing the train whistle, Bing is prompted to return to the orphanage just as the boy is opening the parcel, and the boy exclaims "It's Binky", which proves that he was actually Bing's son all along!

Bing wins a stuffed dog at the fair.

By 1953, Hollywood was ready to expose some of the horrors of war, and this movie really showed how lives were destroyed by the Nazis. The film *Little Boy Lost* was adapted from the book of the same name by Marghanita Laski. She originally sold the rights to actor John Mills, but he sold the rights then to Paramount Studios. The author was worried that the role that she created would be ruined by having an American singer play the title role, but after she saw the movie, she was extremely happy with the way Bing had portrayed the title character.

This movie Bing made at a tough part of his life. Urged by his ailing wife Dixie and her doctors, Bing traveled to Paris in September of 1952 to film the movie. In France Bing worked a little over a month on the film before going home to be with Dixie. Bing was not fully aware of how sick Dixie was. Dixie, weakened by cancer, met Bing at the train station. However, the next day she slipped into a coma and died five days later. This marked a dark time for Bing, but even though he filmed most of *Little Boy Lost* already, he still had some reshoots to do. He also had pivotal scene to film with Claude Dauphin, where Dauphin makes Bing's character listen to how his wife in the movie was murdered by the Nazis. Everyone on the set was worried how Bing was going to film the scene after his own wife passing away. Reportedly Bing got through the scene in one take, but after the scene was done Bing excused himself to his trailer, and he remained in there the rest of the day. While I cannot imagine what Bing was thinking as he filmed the movie, his own personal tragedy added to the emotion of what his character was going through.

This role for Bing was different than any other movie role to date, but his superb acting should not overshadow the performance of Christian Fourcade as the orphaned boy. Bing's character could not believe at first that the boy could be his son, because the boy was sickly and meek – but Christian Fourcade not only conveyed that weakness but brought strength to the little boy's character. As a boy, probably the same age as the character, I was a non-athletic kid with not many friends who lived a lonely life like the boy, so I have always felt a sense of kinship to the boy, even though I was not an orphan. Nicole Maurey, as Bing's wife, was not in the movie long, but she and Bing definitely had a great chemistry. Bing enjoyed working with Nicole so much that almost a decade later he made sure she would be cast as his love interest in 1960's *High Time*. The acting in *Little Boy Lost* in general is top notch.

Even though the film was a drama, there was some music in the movie. Johnny Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen wrote most of the score. They wrote two French-styled songs "A Propos de Rien" and Cela M'est Egal", but the standout song for me was the song "The Magic Window" which Bing sings to the boy while they were bonding at the zoo. It's a slight song, but a song that has always stuck with me through the years. The movie also included a cute version of "The Darktown Strutters' Ball" which Nicole and Bing sing together in French as they are falling in love. I wish Bing would have recorded the song, but he never did except in 1962 for one of his sing-along albums.

The critics seemed to like the film, and it had its New York premiere on September 21, 1953. The following day Bosley Crowther of The New York Times wrote:

"…here Mr. Crosby is playing a straight dramatic role in a picture of deep emotional content and genuinely tragic, overtones. Except for two or three song numbers that

are worked in consistently, there are few other points of contact with the bright and chipper Bingle of old. And yet it must be said for Mr. Crosby that he manages to convey a strong sense of real emotional torment in a tragically wracked character and that he serves as a credible buffer in a candidly heart-socking film..."

I watched this film as a young boy in the mid-1980s, feeling much like the little boy at the orphanage, but now over thirty years later I am viewing the film as a married man with two beautiful children, one being a son, and I can appreciate what Bing Crosby's character was going through trying to find his son. It is a horror I would never want to face. Knowing now that Bing's wife Dixie was dying during the making of the movie, makes Bing's acting even more remarkable in the movie. It is a shame that this film has never been officially released on VHS, let alone DVD, but if you can find a copy to view, this is required Bing Crosby watching. It is a movie that will remain in your mind a long time after watching it.

David Lobosco *davidlobosco@yahoo.com*

(Editor: Well said, David. There is a full version of the film on YouTube in good quality so grab it while it's there. Have your handkerchiefs ready because the closing scenes always reduce me to tears. The film is helped by Bing's narration which helps to move on the action and clarify Bing's character's thinking. Bing's acting really is superb and I'm surprised he didn't get an Oscar nomination for it.)

One Sweet Letter from You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters and emails received since the last issue.

Frank Startup, *by email from Cirencester, Gloucestershire, UK*

Your obituary of Doris Day contained an intriguing speculation about why she and Bing did not work together, and I wonder whether or not there might be support for it in the case of Lee Wiley.

Wiley and Crosby moved in many of the same musical circles in the 1940s, obviously admired and enjoyed working with the same group of jazz musicians and were employed by the same record label, yet they cut only one side together, a choice of song which did neither of them any favours and is now pretty much unplayable because of its crass racial characterisations.

She was involved with Victor Young for some time, and later was in a reportedly toxic marriage with Jess Stacy. She is said to have had many lovers and, if that is true, it is reasonable to suppose that at least some of them came from the musical circles she shared with Crosby. According to Wikipedia, one of her parting shots to Stacy was, 'What will Bing Crosby be thinking of you divorcing me?' Liner notes in CDs I have of her cite Crosby as an admirer and supporter, yet there is no mention of her in Gary Giddins' biography, and I don't remember her being name-checked in 'Call Me Lucky'.

Could this be another case of discretion - or moral judgement, given his apparent disapproval of the philandering of some of his male colleagues, as described in 'Swinging on a Star'?

Much of this, of course, is based on gossip, and it might just be that Wiley's smoky, sophisticated, three o'clock in the morning vocal style was not considered compatible with the Crosby image at that time, but whatever the reason, the outcome is regrettable: I'd much rather have heard him sing with Lee Wiley than Doris Day.

Thanks for yet another engrossing edition of *BING*.

(Editor: Many thanks for your thoughts, Frank. Back in BING #130, (spring 2002), Bob Achorn had some things to say about the only recording Bing made with Lee Wiley. He wrote:

Over the years, Bing offered kind remarks about many of the female singers who worked with him - performers like Connee Boswell, Peggy Lee, Ella Fitzgerald and Rosemary Clooney. But the singer he once called "the greatest stylist of them all" worked with him only one time, and that in passing. She was Lee Wiley.

Miss Wiley (1908-1975) came from Oklahoma to do radio work in 1931 with Leo Reisman's Orchestra and then with Paul Whiteman (after Bing had left the Whiteman fold.) She supposedly refused a new contract with Whiteman because her then boyfriend, the conductor Victor Young, was denied credit on the air for his vocal arrangements. Miss Wiley eventually became popular in New York as a radio and cabaret singer. She developed a cult of admirers - including, evidently, Bing. She often worked with jazz musicians but denied being a jazz singer.

She had setbacks. She was sidelined by tuberculosis. She was plagued by heavy drinking. At times, she dropped out entirely - then came back to sing again. She managed to go into musical history books as the first popular singer to record albums limited to specific composers or lyricists. Soon after, Bing did some of that - Porter, Gershwin, Kern, Stephen Foster, etc.

When Lee Wiley recorded eight Harold Arlen compositions in 1940, the only words outside or inside the 78 r.p.m. album jacket, other than the title, were the raves from Bing: "A great album. Arlen music played by the Masters, and sung by the greatest stylist of them all. Miss Lee Wiley."

The "Masters" turned out to be a collection of New York jazz musicians fronted by Eddie Condon. Bing

himself ultimately cut three numbers with Condon and his forces in January, 1946. But he didn't get to work with "the greatest stylist of them all" until March 17, 1947, and then it was an odd one-shot arrangement.

Early in 1947, Jack Kapp of (American) Decca was patching together for October release an album of Jerome Kern - Oscar Hammerstein II songs from their 1927 musical, "Show Boat." He had on hand recordings by four Decca artists, including Bing's 1945 version with Toots Camarata of "Ol' Man River." Crosby was the main selling point for the album. And Kapp had no Crosby number for the B side of Bing's "Ol' Man River" disc. Worse, the other prime songs from "Show Boat" had been taken by Kenny Baker, Tony Martin and Frances Langford, three Decca artists whose earlier recordings were to be added to Bing's to create the album.

Kapp's solution was to hitch on to a Crosby recording date an additional piece of material from "Show Boat." It was a comedy patter song written by Kern and Hammerstein for the 1936 movie version. They called it "Ah Still Suits Me." The piece had been created to give Paul Robeson (duetting with Hattie McDaniel) more screen time. Robeson, busy at home and abroad with concerts, shows and films since the 1920s, was becoming star material in the United States.

The March 17, 1947, recording session in Los Angeles was designed mainly to let Bing warble two solos from "The Emperor Waltz" film score. "Ah Still Suits Me" was the other number to be cut.

Crosby and Miss Wiley recorded the duet under the somewhat moderated title of "I Still Suits Me." They sang it winningly, but it was the sort of "Southern dialect" material that would not be featured today, at least as written. From what he had said seven years earlier, Bing surely looked forward to working with Lee Wiley. Presumably, Jack Kapp selected their material. But it seems reasonable to think that Victor Young, who conducted the March 17 session, had much to do with bringing Bing and Lee together. He had been a long-time friend of each of them. Indeed, Crosby had insisted that Young conduct the band for Bing's first solo radio show for CBS in 1931. In 1947, Young unquestionably realized that a recording date with Bing, then at the peak of his fame, would be a boost to Lee's unsteady career.

Among Bing's 2,300 recordings, "challenge" numbers like "I Still Suits Me" occur occasionally ("Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better," Crosby - Mercer, Crosby - Hope, etc.) But the Crosby duet with Wiley probably would not have been developed if "I Still Suits Me" had not been the likeliest available "Show Boat" candidate to fill out Decca's album. (Which was not filled out from that show, after all. To come up with eight songs, Kapp had to plug in a Tony Martin rendition of "All the Things You Are," from a different Kern - Hammerstein show.)

By 1947, Bing, at 44, and Lee Wiley, at 39, had become sophisticated and skilled interpreters of show tunes and romantic ballads as well as lively jazz numbers. It seems a pity that they did not record duets of such numbers, in addition to "I (Ah) Still Suits Me." Although Bing sang the song as a duet with Peggy Lee on his Philco show of April 16, 1947 and with Jana Mason on his GE show of March 7, 1954, as far as I know Lee Wiley never touched the song again.

Bob Achorn

We'll never know why Bing and Ms Wiley did not work together again. She never appeared on his radio show either.

Many members wrote with their thoughts on the future of the magazine and we don't have space to include all the letters. However, one which seemed to encapsulate the majority view of the UK members was this from Ken Brown.)

Ken Brown, *Pinner, Middlesex, UK.*

Thank you for asking for members' opinions on the way forward for the ICC. My choice would certainly be (c), that the annual fee should be increased from its present figure of £20.00.

Considering all the dedicated work that goes into the preparation of each issue of the magazine, I think it is remarkable that you have been able to maintain the sum of £20 for as long as you have, although I fully realise that this has only been made possible by the kind donations made by members!

Regarding the appearance of the latest issue of *BING* No 182, I must say that I am most impressed with the quite outstanding quality, which certainly matches that produced by your previous printer, which of course was always excellent!

So, to sum up, my recommendation is definitely to increase the annual fee in order to maintain three issues per year!

Richard Muirhead, *by email from East Calder, West Lothian, Scotland, UK*

Thanks for the latest edition of *BING*. The revised layout is excellent. It continues to amaze me how you and your colleagues can continue to deliver such high quality content, it can't be easy. I suppose we are fortunate Bing had such a long, successful and versatile career and maintained a close link with his worldwide fan base. Whenever you wrote to Bing you received a personal reply, not many entertainers of his stature matched that. As I have commented before there is no doubt that the ICC plays a major role in maintaining his profile and encouraging commercial and media interest. Members must support this and in terms of the future options available I would urge we maintain three issues per year and increase subscriptions to fully cover production and admin costs. Having said that I also appreciate the pressure on the *BING* production

team to continue to maintain these high standards. This is a commitment which must be applauded and in that regard reduction to two issues a year would undoubtedly ease things for you.

Hopefully all of the membership will respond re future options. With an ever increasing number of commercial magazines folding due to poor circulations it is vital that they do.

(Editor: Also many others wrote about the change of printer and I particularly liked this one.)

Michael Reynolds, *by email from Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, UK*

You ask about the new look of the magazine. The answer's "excellent". It did not cross my mind before that those up to number 181 needed any improvement nor indeed might be tweaked to advantage in any way. However, now that a comparison can be made somehow the replacement format seems, appropriately, a touch more venerable without detracting from its appeal. Outwardly the cover's surrounding darker colours do that trick, I suppose, though they may change by the month as before.

Inside, page 2 is clearer with emphases well chosen. Using the same dark blue as on the cover throughout the magazine for headings is a unifying masterstroke, enhanced by using the yellow lettering similarly.

Doing without black edging round any pictures works well. Emphasising page numbers with colour and moving them to the outer corner is helpful and adding the cover's words to every page a nice touch.

The height of narrative lettering having been shortened and lines becoming closer together more information can be included on each page. But as eyesight worsens reading difficulty might become an issue. To counter that perhaps a simpler font like Arial will be considered in the future. It would be less in keeping with Bing's era but may help to retain members for longer and be more attractive to those joining. Just a thought.

(Editor: Thanks, Michael. If the smaller print size is causing difficulties to any of you, please let me know and we'll discuss the matter with the printer.)

Mark Scrimger, *Battle Creek, Michigan, USA*

Thought I'd write and tell you how much I enjoyed the latest issue of our club's journal. Because I've never hooked up to the Internet, I haven't contributed much to the magazine in the last several years. This said, I'm still keeping my hand in Crosbywise. I'm working with Bill Stimson, a writer and journalism professor from Spokane, Washington, who is writing a book about Bing's early life, education, and musical apprenticeship in his hometown before he left for Los Angeles in 1925. Thoroughly researched, it will cover a lot of new ground and will include contemporary newspaper articles and reviews from the local papers and several never-seen photographs gathered from the families of Bing's old friends and acquaintances. With Bill's and the Bing Crosby Advocates group's help, I was able to place a vintage 1920's drum kit in the Crosby house in Spokane. It sits in the parlor underneath a large picture of Musicalader Bing Crosby at the drums.

The docents say that it makes a nice talking point as they can point out that Bing started his musical career as a jazz drummer, not a singer. The Crosby parlor would have been the music room way back when. Bing mentions a piano in there, his dad's ukulele and at some point, his drum kit. The picture hanging above the kit is an enlargement from the famous Musicaladers on stage photo. I blew it up to 8 x 10 and was surprised at all the details that came out – especially the individual pieces of the kit.

My main reason for writing was to add some follow-up information on John Bassett's article on Bing's first recording. I'm enclosing an article I wrote for the summer 1998 issue of BINGANG. It kind of continues the story where John left off. His finding a copy of Columbia 790-D was great but coming up with a copy of Columbia 815-D would be a super find. I've never come across one.

This first recording has several controversies surrounding it. When Gary Giddins' first volume came out, I asked him if he had been called out on anything in it. He said the biggest gaffe was that, when quoting from Al Rinker's unpublished autobiography, he mistakenly wrote that this first record was recorded acoustically. He corrected this to read electronically in the later paperback edition. However, he still left in the part that Bing and Al had sung into a megaphone per Rinker's memory. I have a Decca 10" interview record where Bing states that they sang into a tulip-shaped horn. Nevertheless, the W in the matrix numbers and the circled W stamped before the number in the wax indeed indicate that it was a Western Electric recording for Columbia made about a year after the technology was introduced.

The other controversy is also technical in nature. It

revolves around the speed at which the recording was made. Some argue that it was recorded at a faster speed than 78rpm and is the reason the vocals sound like two chipmunks. Ken Twiss even offered a 45 that contained the recording at a slower speed. This was done to put Bing more in his vocal range. The jury is still out on this. I would be curious to know if the slowed down recording, which would also have dropped in key, was one that the arrangers would have used at the time for an orchestra. Many of Bing's recordings for Victor have him singing out of his normal range. This was because the vocal part of the recording was assigned to an anonymous vocalist who could sing in the pre-determined key. Bing credits Whiteman arranger, Bill Challis, with tailoring his arrangements to highlight Bing's natural vocal range.

(Editor: It's great to hear from Mark again. He has done so much important research about Bing. I always looked forward to his articles in BINGANG. He mentioned his summer 1998 article and this is how it reads.

Bing's First Recording – The Rest of the Story

Because Bing seemed to have little recollection of his first recording session, I've always assumed it was an impromptu, in-and-out kind of deal. However, an article I came across in the July, 1990 issue of *The New Amberola Graphic* by John Heliker shows that the session was actually a full-blown affair. One participant, Peggy Bernier, was a singing star of sorts with a pre-Helen Kane / Betty Boop style of vocalizing. In 1926 she was performing on the Paramount-Publix circuit, as were Crosby and Rinker at the time of these recordings. Several sources have mentioned that at one time Bing was enamored of Miss Bernier, but apparently the feeling was not mutual. And that, as Paul Harvey would say, is the rest of the story.

COLUMBIA RECORDS RECORDING SESSION – OCT. 18, 1926 – LOS ANGELES

DON CLARK AND HIS LOS ANGELES BILTMORE HOTEL ORCHESTRA

W142785-3 I've Got the Girl, Voc. Crosby & Rinker – Columbia 824-D

W142786 Don't Somebody Need Somebody, Voc. Crosby & Rinker – Unissued

WI42787-1 Me Too, Voc. Peggy Bernier – Test

W142787-2 Me Too, Voc. Peggy Bernier – Columbia 815-D

WI42788 Cuddle Closer, Voc. Peggy Bernier - Unissued

WI42789 Don't Somebody Need Somebody, Voc. Peggy Bernier – Unissued)

W142790-2 Sweet Thing, Voc. Peggy Bernier – Columbia 815-D)

John Jensen, *by email from San Francisco, USA*

The new *BING* magazine is gorgeous. Congratulations to all involved!

In the 1970s in addition to having Bing being a frequent visitor to our radio station he'd often either bring or drop off his more recent recordings for airplay. Thought you'd enjoy seeing his letter talking about his "Bingo Viejo" album and his recent live concert in the city. By the way, I'm hoping to have one of Bing's interviews he did with us transferred and restored for inclusion on our station website soon (KMPXRadio.com). I'll let you know when that happens. Feel free to publish his letter if you feel it warrants enough interest.

(Editor: Many thanks, John. It's certainly a very interesting letter from Bing and we have reproduced it on our inside back cover.)

Crosbyana

Ken Crossland has been looking back half a century.

One of the most welcome - and ultimately most disappointing - movie releases in 2019 was *Judy*, a biopic, of sorts, built around the last, unhappy months of the life of Judy Garland. When I first heard that it was in the offing, I was delighted. All too often, I find myself trying to explain to people about the talent that she possessed. There is no better testimony to it than what Bing said whenever asked to name the most talented performer that he ever worked with.

"Judy Garland, without a doubt …. great singer, great actress, brilliant comedienne. She could do anything - drama, high comedy, slapstick".

Sadly, the film, for me at least, offered nothing to educate a new audience about the real talent that Judy possessed - anyone watching the film out of mere curiosity would conclude that she was a child star who played Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* and who wound up as an egocentric, faded star, bingeing on booze and drugs, with nothing in between. A shame.

Part of the reason of course, that the film appeared this year is that 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of Garland's passing, one of the sadder milestones in a year that seems to have been littered with them. I remember the summer of 1969 like it was yesterday, but I never realised at the time how many of the things that went on that year would live so long in the memory. The Beatles on the Abbey Road crossing, Monty Python at the BBC, "Chappaquiddick", an accident that would cast a shadow over American politics and the Kennedys for three decades, the Woodstock music festival, and "the concession", Jack Nicklaus to Tony Jacklin in the Ryder Cup, now heralded as golf's - maybe even any sports' - greatest act of sportsmanship.

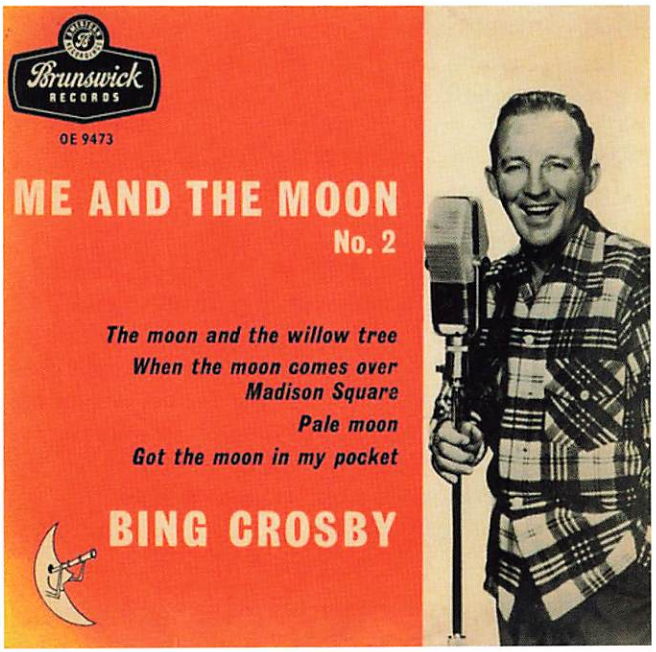
Working with Judy in the war years.

And then, of course, there's the moon. Unless you have been living under a stone, you cannot fail to have had your share of the Apollo landings, the first men on the moon, one giant leap, the "did it really happen" saga, and Richard Nixon's happily unused, but scripted and rehearsed, tribute to the astronauts who didn't make it back. I remember the night Apollo 11 landed. My parents were glued to the TV whilst I was watching a re-run of Bing's "Making Movies" TV special in another room!

All this moon-stuff triggered another train of thought, and indeed another anniversary. In that summer of '69, I was 15 years old and had my first job, a morning paper round that brought me the sum of 15 shillings per week. The worst days were Tuesday and Wednesday, when all the women's magazines and the TV journals used to come out, and my paper-bag weighed a ton, or so it seemed. Come Thursday though, the bag was lighter and I had more time and I could flick through the one or two copies in there of a magazine called "Exchange and Mart". This periodical had a history that went back over 100 years, even then, and looking back now, I can that it was the eBay of the pre-internet age. It offered anything and everything for sale, or indeed for want, and glancing through it before I stuffed it through its target letterbox, I was intrigued by the pages of gramophone records that it contained.

At the age of 15, I was pretty much new to everything, and certainly, Bing. Other than knowing that I was enchanted by the voice and that he made films with Bob Hope, I pretty much knew nothing else. There were plenty of Bing records in the shops, but the manager of my local outlet kept telling me about the ones that he used to sell, and which were now "deleted". It set me off on a trail that led to an ad in the "wants" section of the E&M magazine. That brought a response from a gentleman called Alan Lurie, of Salford in the UK, an ICC member I later discovered, although at the time, I was still discovering the ICC. Alan was really the man who got me started on building a collection, both of Bing and my other great idol, Michael Holliday. I bought lots of things from him, most of which started out as LP or EP titles that played with my imagination. *Bing with a Beat* sounded so modern that I just had to have that… *Mike (and the Other Fella)*, a Michael Holliday EP that I thought might be four duets with Bing, but instead turned out to be his trademark

duets with himself on his tape recorder. I still have the original lists that Alan sent me, and I still have the first two records that I bought from him, and here's the coincidental coincidence. What were they? Two Crosby EPs, "Me and the Moon", numbers 1 and 2, eight songs, all with the moon in the title.



It set me wondering just how extensive the "moon" songs were in our world of Crosbyana. What was the first song that Bing recorded with "moon" in the title, and what was the last? What was the most enduring? And what was the most unusual? First and last surprised me. The first record with moon in the title was "Get Out and Get Under the Moon", for Whiteman on 22 May 1928. The first Crosby solo recording, as far as I can tell, was "Moonstruck" from 9 June 1933 (although Bing did sing "Moon Song" in a *Music That Satisfies* radio show in March of the that year). The last? Well, a surprise because I cannot find anything later than Bing's 22 June 1960 pairing of "How High the Moon" and "Old Devil Moon", for the *El Señor Bing* album. The most enduring? Well, I guess that would have to be "Moonlight Becomes You" which would also score as the final "moon" song that Bing ever sang, featuring as it did in all the Crosby Medley performances between 1975 and 1977.

What about the most unusual? Well, of the songs that have moon in the title, I guess it would be "Moonburn", a notion that is present only in song, although if you widen the net to incorporate songs where the moon features prominently in the lyric if not the title, it leads us nicely to the 1967 recording of "What Do We Do With the World", the B-side to "Step To The Rear" on a Reprise single. A strange song, from two thoroughbred writers, Bob Russell lyrics to music that Henry Mancini originally composed as an incidental theme for the film *Two for the Road*. Ernie Freeman's backing is horribly Sixties-ish, all brass, flutes, tambourines and a high pitched chorus. I suspect that somewhere in the shadows at the back of the studio, the ghost of Jack Kapp would have been found, screaming "where's the melody?" It reminds me of one of last Fred Astaire dance solos on TV, from around the same time, the ever elegant Astaire trying to grace his way around a backing track that was so horribly mechanical. Astaire looked as uncomfortable as Bing sounds. There are some studio outtakes of Bing singing Ford commercials for *The Ford Road Show* in the Fifties, and with the last ditty docked, Bing's derision is apparent. "That's all then, this stuff?" I suspect he might have used that line again. As for me, I think I'll stick with my "Me and the Moon" EPs.

Ken Crossland *ken54@blueyonder.co.uk*

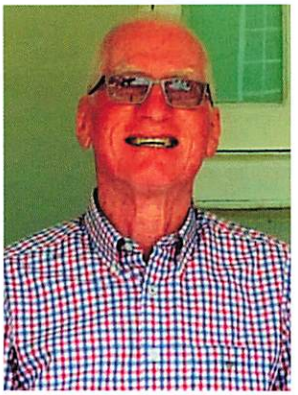
(Editor: Many thanks, Ken. In his article in our last issue, Ken queried whether the Bing & Satchmo album had been done "live". I recently came across an article by the well-respected jazz writer Ralph J. Gleason from July 1960. Mr. Gleason had been interviewing Louis and this what he had to say about the album.

> *"He's just finished recording an LP with Bing Crosby and Billy May. Actually, Bing and Louis, though they sing together on the LP, didn't record it together. Billy May made the arrangements and cut the accompaniment first and then, via the wonders of tape recording, Bing and Louis separately recorded their own parts. The final product is due out this fall.*
>
> *(Ralph J. Gleason in his syndicated article about Louis Armstrong seen in The Semi-Weekly Spokesman-Review, July 24, 1960)*

Ken has been maintaining this for at least 30 years and it's nice to see that he has been vindicated at last! Having looked at Satchmo's movements around the time that Bing made the LP in Hollywood, he seemed to have been on the East Coast of the USA and I'll wager that he did his part there too.)

A Note from Australia

Graham Pascoe joins us again to offer some comments on our last issue.



One of the first things which caught my attention in *BING* No. 182 was the reference to the Syracuse Cinephile Society's screening of *If I Had My Way*. That film was shown in Australia, of course. As we know, Bing had recorded the title song on the last day of March 1939, some ten months before the filming of the movie commenced which was the month in which the record was released here. What would not be well known is that within a month of that recording date, some Australians

were able to hear Bing sing 'If I Had My Way'. How that came about is interesting not only because it was precipitated by some local action but also because it's an example of Gary Giddins' observation that Bing made a point of answering his mail.

When Bing Crosby was beginning to make his mark in Australian entertainment in the early 1930s, a Melbourne radio announcer named Norman Banks commenced in 1934 a nightly one-hour program of dance music on station 3KZ. On the evening of 11 April the station broadcast what was almost certainly the first Australian radio program specifically devoted to playing Crosby records exclusively, *A Half Hour with Bing Crosby*, and Banks was probably the announcer. Banks later became a significant force in Bing's radio exposure in Melbourne. In 1939 he was presenting a regular program titled *Crooners and Croonettes* and in May-June of that year the magazine Listener In reported that Banks had received a letter and a record from Bing after he had sent Bing a recorded message of appreciation from six listeners. The record was a single-sided 12-inch US Decca, beginning with a message:

> *Hullo friends in Australia. I was tremendously delighted with the prodigious record ... You know if time permitted and if I had my way I would hop on a boat and come to see you all. Failing this, here is an old American ballad that the Cornet Quartetteers love to harmonise. It is called 'If I Had My Way'.*

The record concluded with Bing singing 'If I Had My Way'. The radio station distributed to each of the six listeners who had recorded the greeting a copy of Ted and Larry Crosby's book Bing which Bing had autographed. (Renowned Crosby collector, the late Gordon Wall played the record for me many years ago but the Cornet Quartetteers are a mystery to me.)

Melbourne's State Theatre was the first to screen *If I Had My Way* in Australia in August 1940. It seated more than 3,000 patrons and its run lasted two weeks. In October it went to Sydney's Lyceum (capacity 1396) for three weeks and in November it ran for one week at two second-run cinemas in the harbour city. Gloria Jean's participation had attracted some advance

publicity in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in March when it reported some 'Hollywood gossip' to the effect that 'The young singer Gloria Jean will be appearing with Bing Crosby in her latest picture for Universal, If I Had My Way'. The day before it opened at the Lyceum the theatre's advertisement for the film was supported by an article titled 'GLORIA JEAN IS TEAMED WITH BING CROSBY' accompanied by four photos, all featuring her and three with Bing. Its ad. on opening day exclaimed 'BING CROSBY AND GLORIA JEAN PAIRED. Here comes the little lady who captured your heart in "The Under-Pup"... (Gary Giddins reckoned that she had 'scored big' in that film.)

What did the critics think of this pairing? In Melbourne, the evening daily *The Herald* described it as a pleasant production with 'plenty of tuneful songs in which the fresh young voice of Gloria Jean mingles with the practised accents of Bing Crosby'. Less enthusiastic was the reviewer of The Sydney Morning Herald, noting that 'Gloria Jean, the child soprano, and Bing Crosby contribute eight songs ... Some, if not all, of Crosby's numbers are certain to win popular applause ... The story is a fair enough vehicle for the music.'

Did Bing's records of the songs win popular applause? 'If I Had My Way' was backed by another song he had recorded in 1939, 'Girl of My Dreams'. It became his fourth-best-selling Australian release of 1940, selling more than seven and a-half thousand by 1955. It had been released months before the movie, unlike the Deccas which offered 'Meet the Sun Half Way' with 'The Pessimistic Character' and 'April Played the Fiddle' with 'I Haven't Time to Be a Millionaire'. Both failed to sell three thousand before their deletion from the catalogue in 1948. That was despite their having received favourable comment such as 'Bing at his best' in the music magazine *Tempo*.

Long after 1940 Sydney folk had more opportunities to see *If I Had My Way*. In 1949 a central city cinema screened it for a week and between 1969 and 1972 it appeared on television three times. When I first saw *If I Had My Way* (not in a cinema but on 'the box') I fell in love with it immediately. As I sit by my computer writing this I look sideways at a lobby card promoting the film with Bing, Gloria Jean and El Brendel at a piano and Gloria's rich uncle with his wife and friends in the background. On the other hand, when I first watched *Just for You* I was less than impressed. It did not occur to me that it may have shown what Bing's life was like, as David Lobosco observed in his 'Celluloid Crosby' column in *BING*. In time I began to appreciate its virtues as ninety-five minutes of good entertainment with some fine songs well sung.

David has written that some US critics were pretty harsh on the movie. Like *If I Had My Way* in 1940, *Just for You* was shown in Melbourne before Sydney. The King's Theatre screened it for four weeks from mid-January 1953. Perhaps *The Herald*'s film critic Deborah Garland was one of the 1376 patrons who watched it in a session on opening day and it was one of five films

she reviewed the next day. She seemed to be surprised to be impressed by Bing:

> *I never thought a Bing Crosby film would go to the head of this review, but here it is ... and mainly because of the crooner himself. His easy, friendly personality makes the film skate along without a hitch. And the way he sings numbers such as 'Zing' can convert any anti-crooners.*

As an aside, it's interesting that she believed that some Australians still detested crooning in 1953. Twenty years previously that certainly was so, but, in 1953?

The reference to 'Zing', of course, was prompted by Bing's duet with Jane Wyman on 'Zing a Little Zong', which David notes led to the song's (unsuccessful) nomination for the Academy Award for Best Original Song of 1952. *Tempo* published a photo of them rehearsing it in its February issue. but its Sydney readers must have been frustrated as their patience was tested because the movie was not shown at the Prince Edward Theatre until 5th June. Members of Australia's Club Crosby, which had been established in 1948, learned from its magazine *BINGANG* that its release in Sydney was delayed because *The Greatest Show on Earth* ran there for nineteen weeks and then Bob Hope's *Son of Paleface* was there for six weeks. *BINGANG* said that newspaper critics gave it a mixed reception although the majority found it enjoyable. It quoted one reviewer:

> *The Hollywood sky is full of stars, but none glows with a more friendly light than Bing Crosby. In his latest film Just for You, his personality fills the theatre. His style is simple, homely and moving. Like all of his films, it is free from undesirable incidents ... this is done with that heart warming mixture of comedy and humanity, which is one of the secrets of his success.*

The seating capacity of the Prince Edward was almost the same as the King's and the film's run there was four weeks also.

Two Decca records with four songs from *Just for You* were in the shops when the movie opened in Melbourne. 'Zing a Little Zong' was backed by 'On the 10:10 from Ten-Ten-Tennessee' and the former earned favourable comment in Sydney's *The Sunday Herald*, which was critical of the current crop of popular songs, but decided that this one was worth attention. 'Zing' was a chart hit for ten weeks. The record remained in the shops until 1954 by which time it had sold almost ten thousand copies, becoming the second-top Crosby release of 1953, but more than ten thousand fewer than his best seller with 'The Isle of Innisfree'. David has reminded us that the Academy Award for the Best Song went to 'High Noon' and records of that song by Frankie Laine and Tex Ritter were on the charts for eighteen weeks, reaching number three. The other Decca with 'Just for You' and 'I'll Si-Si Ya in Bahia' were available for just one year and sold a little over four thousand discs. Bing's recordings of 'A Flight of Fancy' and 'The Live Oak Tree' were not pressed as singles in this country.

By 1953 there were signs that, although Bing's movies were doing well at the box office, his popularity with Australian record buyers was fading. In 1952 *BINGANG* had complained that EMI was neglecting Bing in its record releases and its September 1953 issue said 'we're back in the doldrums once more'. Five of Bing's songs were chart hits in 1953 but consider another EMI release from March of that year. It was a Columbia disc by Teresa Brewer with 'Till I Waltz Again with You'. By the end of the year it was a Gold Record and it lasted until 1955 with total sales of more than fifty-seven thousand.

As usual, *BING* magazine gets us thinking about many of Bing's records. John Bassett's research into Bing's first recording was illuminating. 'Bing's 'I've Got the Girl' was released on an Australian Columbia record number 0688 in 1927. but it was credited, as it was in the United Kingdom, to the Charleston Serenaders. Crosby and Rinker were simply described as 'vocal chorus'. The month of its release is uncertain. A Sydney record wholesaler advertised it in September 1927 as one of '... these fascinating LATEST DANCE HITS, ELECTRONICALLY RECORDED ON NEW PROCESS COLUMBIA RECORDS. 10-inch Double-sided, 4/- [four shillings] each'. Four shillings was a typical price for records of popular music but it was almost two hours work for an average man and for only one shilling a Sydney person could get into a city cinema's front stalls or for three shillings into the upstairs lounge seats. The Australian record was backed by 'If You See Sally' by Ted Lewis and his band and a vocal chorus.

If some Australians considered 'I've Got the Girl' to be an appealing song they could have bought other versions including one by Nick Lucas and another by Abe Lyman's Californians. The coupling of Bing and Al's 'I've Got the Girl' with a Ted Lewis recording undoubtedly resulted in Bing being heard in many Australian homes. An indication of the popularity of Ted Lewis in Australia is the inclusion of thirteen of his records in the Columbia catalogue of 1928. The catalogue of December 1929 did not include 0688, suggesting that it had been deleted beforehand.

Martin McQuade's contribution made me regret that I've not seen Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate* and 'A Joy Delerious' is an apt description of the music in the show. I wondered how Bing's studio recordings of songs from the show fared in Australia. Although *Kiss Me Kate* opened in the USA in 1948 it did not come to Australia until 1952. Neither of Bing's January 1949 show tune recordings, 'So in Love' and 'Why Can't You Behave', was released in Australia at the time. The history of the song 'Unchained Melody' which Martin related was a surprise. The song reached the top of our hit parades in 1955 but the records we bought were by Al Hibbler and by Les Baxter and His Orchestra. Bing's 1955 recording was for radio use and was not issued as a commercial recording. Thirty-six years later it turned up here on the J&B label in an album titled *The Very Best of Val Doonican and Bing*

Crosby. Each singer contributed half of the tracks and Bing's included 'Unchained Melody' with the Buddy Cole accompaniment 'up-dated' with Pete Moore's Orchestra in 1978. The album was in our charts for one week, at the 85th position.

Generations of Australians have had some enthusiasm for country songs so I'm sure Anton will be pleased to learn that we Aussies have fared well because many of Bing's recordings of country songs have been available here. How have we responded to them? Considering the songs which Anton mentions from the Decca catalogue from the 1930s and 1940s, 'The Last Round-Up' was on one of the first new Crosby records to be released in March 1934 when the local Columbia company broke the two-year drought of new Crosby recordings. By the end of the year, more than five thousand records had been sold; phenomenal sales figures for the time It remained in the catalogue until 1955, selling more than thirteen thousand. During the 1930s, Joe Cahill took his travelling picture show to small rural towns which did not have their own cinemas. During the interval he played Bing's record of 'The Last Round-Up'. In 1936 'I'm an Old Cowhand' with 'I Can't Escape from You' and the other Decca with songs from *Rhythm on the Range* were described by one reviewer as Bing 'right at the top of his form'. 'A gem' was how another described 'I'm an Old Cowhand'. Each of the discs sold about two thousand copies. During the war years there were often long delays in the release of popular records in Australia. 'San Antonio Rose, reached us in February 1942, more than a year late. In excess of ten thousand were sold in its first year, another five thousand in 1943 and more than twenty-two thousand by 1955.

The first of Bing's 1942 recordings to be pressed in Australia was 'Deep in the Heart of Texas' which came here in February 1943. Aussies must have had a hankering for the lone star state as they bought almost four and a half thousand copies that year. It was backed by 'Humpty Dumpty Heart' and sold close to eight thousand discs until 1953. 'Deep in the Heart of Texas' had become popular before Bing's record was available, probably because radio stations were playing other records including imported discs. It became Australia's second-top song in 1942 but the most popular versions were by Gene Autry and Horace Heidt. The year's top song was '(There'll Be Blue Birds Over) The White Cliffs of Dover' and I'm sure I don't have to tell you the name of the singer of that hit.

When EMI released 'Pistol Packin' Mama' with 'Vict'ry Polka' in 1944 it must have been confident of its prospects. The same coupling had sold one million copies in the USA and it became a double-sided number one hit record here. The two songs were in the top twenty-five songs of 1944. It was Bing's best seller that year, an impressive achievement as it had only been available for four months. It remained on sale until 1951 with sales approaching eight thousand.

To say that 1945 was a good year for Bing Crosby's records is an understatement. Eleven of his recordings were in the top twenty-five of the year, including each of the top five positions. 'Don't Fence Me In' was backed by 'The Three Caballeros' and became the top song of the year. A reviewer writing as 'Critic' in *Music Maker* predicted that 'Bing's followers will be thrilled to bits with these so very popular hits'. They must have been thrilled because it remained in the catalogue until 1955, selling well over sixteen thousand copies.

I've not been able to trace an original issue of *Bing Crosby Sings the Great Country Hits* in Australia but it was reissued in 1978. It was reviewed in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in April and Christine Hogan was impressed by Bing's sure interpretation and his ability to add another dimension to the songs.

Oh, the singer of 'The White Cliffs of Dover' was of course Vera Lynn.

Graham Pascoe *gpascoe34@bigpond.com*

(Editor: Many thanks, Graham. Something to bear in mind when considering Bing's record sales figures in Australia is the relatively lower population there when compared with the USA and the UK. The population in Australia was as follows:

1931: 6,526,485

1936: 6,778,372

1941: 7,109,898

1946: 7,465,157

1951: 9,425,563

2017: 24, 600,000

Graham continues to present his show 'Morning Music' on community radio station 2MCE-FM each Monday morning from 9 to 11 (Australian Eastern Time). Usually he plays recordings of popular music from the 1930s, 40s and 50s but he invariably plays a couple of Crosby recordings. The station broadcasts on 92.3 FM in Bathurst, New South Wales and its programmes are streamed (but not archived) on www.2mce.org.)

Bing on the Box

TV highlights - USA & Canada

Bing's films and other items seen on TV since our last issue was prepared were:

High Time	FXM
Stagecoach	STZEN
That's Entertainment	TCM

USA & Canadian Radio

Arne Fogel's long-running weekly radio program "The Bing Shift" continues on Sundays at 7 p.m. (CST) on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. It can now be accessed on demand at **http://www.jazz88.fm/show/the-bing-shift/** and it's always enjoyable with an eclectic selection. I've said this before but Arne really is an excellent and knowledgeable presenter and his program should not be missed. As an example, here's the playlist for his October 6 broadcast:

> Hangin' Loose – Gone Fishin' – Ain't Doin' Bad Doin' Nothin' – My Heart Is a Hobo – Busy Doing Nothing – Breezin' Along with the Breeze – Miss Annabelle Lee – I Can't Get Started – (Oh! Baby Mine) I Get So Lonely – Indian Summer (with Rosemary Clooney) – Jealous Heart – Little Lady Make-Believe – Going My Way – Love Is Just Around the Corner – Feudin' and Fightin' – Goodbye, Little Darlin', Goodbye

Greg Van Beek's weekly radio series Nostalgia Radio Time on 1420 AM WJUB and three other stations has continued its long run on Saturday nights starting at 9 pm (CST) / 10 pm (ET). Greg always has a "Bing Sings" segment in the hour-long program.

On July 20, Greg had a special "Saturday night with Mr. C" as he shone the spotlight on Perry Como's RCA Victor LP's from 1955-62. In his regular Bing Sings feature, he had the original Mr. C singing one of Perry's big hits ("Magic Moments"), and his Old Time Radio Time slot had the *Kraft Music Hall* from September 16, 1943.

Recording the Philco show with Gary Cooper.

Greg followed up on October 5 with Bing's Philco show from October 1, 1947. This was the first show recorded with magnetic tape and it starred Gary Cooper and Peggy Lee. You can catch Greg online at the www.1420thebreeze.com site. Each Sunday the show from the previous week is uploaded in Podcast form at

Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.

https://nostalgiaradiotime.podomatic.com/ where you'll find nearly a full year of the shows available on demand 24/7!

Crosby Internet Radio has continued to broadcast 24/7 with a wide variety of shows including some of Arne Fogel's excellent "Bing Shift" programs. The shows change on a monthly basis with the 15-minute 1954-56 show typically running throughout the day with other programs such as the KMH, Philco, Chesterfield and GE shows being interleaved every hour or so. The Crosby-Clooney shows are used frequently too.

WAMU (88.5 FM) is a public news/talk station that services the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. It is owned by American University, and its studios are located near the campus in northwest Washington. Their long running *The Big Broadcast* show on Sunday nights features a collection of vintage radio shows from the '30s, '40s, and '50s, hosted by Murray Horwitz. Mr. Crosby pops up now and again and on August 4, Bing's Chesterfield show from January 25, 1950 with Louis Armstrong, Jack Teagarden and Peggy Lee as guests was heard. Then on September 29, the Chesterfield show of September 28, 1949 with Peggy Lee and Abe Burrows as guests was broadcast.

TV highlights - UK

Crosby items seen since our last issue was prepared were:

Crooners at the BBC	BBC4
It's in the Groove	Talking Pictures
Road to Bali	Retro Movies

BBC repeated their "Crooners at the BBC" compilation which included Bing singing "That's What Life Is All About" from the Vera Lynn Show in 1975.

"It's in the Groove" was mentioned to me by Fred Wadsworth and I managed to catch up with a repeat. It's a 19-minute short film made in 1949 as part of The March of Time series. It takes a look at the history of the recording industry starting with the halcyon years of the 1920s and we see a clip of Paul Whiteman and his orchestra playing "Whispering". Think Bing can be seen leaning on the piano. With the recession,

the industry collaped in the 1930s before being saved by Bing and Decca with their 35c records. At that point we hear Bing singing "Sweet Leilani". The film looks at the juke box years and we see Eddie Condon, Guy Lombardo and Eddy Arnold performing. The musicians strike of 1948 is featured and we finish with the first recording after the strike which included Perry Como and Fran Warren amongst others. If you would like to see the film, it can be viewed for free at **https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-its-in-the-groove-1949-online**

Jeremy Rose wrote to tell us about Bing getting a brief mention on the long-running UK BBC quiz show, "University Challenge" on August 12. The quiz-master quoted the first two lines of the refrain of "Learn to Croon" and asked the (admittedly very young) contestants which popular crooner had introduced the song. After some conferring, they came up with "Frank Sinatra". Heigh-ho..!

Matthew Long spotted a Bing item on the BBC programme "Antiques Road Trip" in which antiques experts set off on a road trip around the UK searching for treasures and competing to make the most money at auction. In the show televised on September 25, a visit to an antiques shop produced a letter from Bing to someone in Wales in 1946. It was the usual "Due to materials shortages" a photo could not be sent and it mentioned *Road to Utopia*. As we know, these letters were not actually signed by Bing and the expert decided not to buy it for the £60 being sought.

Finally, it was nice to hear Sky TV using Bing's version of "Anything You Can Do" with The Andrews Sisters as background to its Sky Sports trailer for "The Ashes".

UK Radio

The National Presenters

Songs played on the BBC national networks (Radio2 unless stated) of which we were aware over the last four months were:

Don Black: It's the Talk of the Town (July 28) – On August 4, Don looked at the work of Johnny Burke and played: Swinging on a Star and Road to Morocco (with Bob Hope) – How About You (Sep. 8)

Elaine Paige on Sunday: Talk to the Animals (Aug. 25)

Sounds of the 60s with Tony Blackburn – What Do We Do with the World (July 13)

The Beatles Novelty Songs: with Jimmy Tarbuck – Hey Jude (Sep. 26)

Jazz Record Requests (Radio3) – Brother, Can You Spare a Dime (Aug. 3)

The Local Radio Presenters

The BBC website has details of the Crosby songs used in the last four months and the shows playing a fair number of Bing tracks are shown below. Do please support these presenters with requests and feedback.

Gerald Jackson continues to use his two programmes on local radio - "Unforgettable" on Radio Lancashire on Sunday evenings at 8 p.m. and the other, the similarly named "Gerald Jackson: Unforgettable" on Radio Manchester on Sunday nights at 10pm to play our man frequently. Gerald does his whole 4-hour stint live. We now send Gerald a copy of the magazine each time to thank him for his support of Bing and he gave us a nice mention on July 21. Our member Margaret White regularly has her requests played on the Manchester segment.

Among the songs heard were:

As Time Goes By (July 7) – The Magic Window (July 14) – Beautiful Dreamer (July 21) – Stranger in Paradise (July 28) – In The Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening (July 28) – Pennies from Heaven (Aug. 18) – You Are My Sunshine (Aug. 18) – The Best Things in Life Are Free (Sep. 15) – The Anniversary Waltz (Sep. 15) - That's What Life Is All About (Sep. 22) – Istanbul (Sep. 22) – The Isle of Innisfree (Sep. 29) – Well, Did You Evah! (Sep. 29) – Be Careful, It's My Heart (Oct. 6) – Autumn Leaves (Oct. 13) – Tea for Two (Oct. 13)

Beverley Humphreys presents *Beverley's World of Music:* (BBC Radio Wales) – In the Cool Cool Cool of the Evening (July 7) – Red Sails in the Sunset (Jul. 28) - Dear Hearts and Gentle People (Aug. 4) – Isle of Capri (Aug. 18) – It's Been a Long, Long Time (Aug. 25) – Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep (Aug. 25) – I'll Be Seeing You (Sep. 1) – True Love (Oct. 6)

Bill Rennells' ***Harmony Night*** show with Al Ryan on BBC local radio stations throughout the South East of England and on the Internet. – Swinging on a Star (July 14) – The One I Love Belongs to Somebody Else (July 21 – for Ian Lawrence) – Well, Did You Evah! – Laroo Laroo Lilli Bolero (Aug. 11) – The Spaniard That Blighted My Life (Aug. 11) – Swinging on a Star (Aug. 25) – Galway Bay (Sep. 22) – St. Louis Blues (Sep. 22 – for Ian Lawrence) – Be Careful, It's My Heart (Oct. 13)

David Allen: (BBC Radio Surrey) – Around the World (June 29) – True Love (Aug. 10) – That's What Life Is All About (Aug. 10)

Howard Leader (BBC Radio Lincolnshire) has a programme of big band swing and balladeers which goes out each Sunday afternoon. – Way Down Yonder in New Orleans – San Antonio Rose (my request – Howard gave us a nice plug for the club) – Dinah – Deep Purple (June 30) – My Blue Heaven (Command Performance) – Muskrat Ramble – Alexander's Ragtime Band (July 28) – Rocky Mountain Moon –

Don't Fence Me In – Love Thy Neighbour – Home on the Range (Sep. 22) – Ain't Got a Dime to My Name (Sep. 29 – for Stan White) – Well, Did You Evah! (Oct. 13)

Kelly-Anne Smith's ***Easy Sunday*** show on BBC Coventry & Warwickshire plays our kind of music and Crosby songs played include: Swinging on a Star (June 30) – When My Baby Smiles at Me (July 14) – Thanks for the Memory (Aug. 4) – Sam's Song (Aug. 11) – Around the World (Aug. 18) – Ain't Misbehavin' (Sep. 1) – Swinging on a Star (Sep. 22)

Roy Noble: (BBC Radio Wales) – Brazil (June 30) – At the Jazz Band Ball (Aug. 11) – Heatwave (Aug. 25) – True Love (Sep. 8) – Love Won't Let Us Get Away (Oct. 13)

Malcolm Macfarlane *macwilmslo@aol.com*

Once in a While

Personalities associated with Bing who have left us since our last issue was prepared, include:

Arte Johnson, the American comic actor who was a regular on television's *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In* died on July 3 at the age of 90.

Born in Benton Harbor, Mich., he attended the University of Illinois, where he graduated in radio journalism. In New York, he wrote for a calendar company, and after a spell in the US Army took a publicity job at Viking Press. In 1949 a chance audition in his lunch-hour for the composer Jule Styne landed Johnson a part as a middle-aged Frenchman in the Broadway musical "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes".

Moving into television, he appeared in early series including "Sally" and "Hennessy," as well as in the "Twilight Zone" episode "The Whole Truth" as a car salesman who punches a used car lot owner.

During a slack period working in a menswear shop, he auditioned for the television producer George Schlatter, who was so impressed with Johnson's funny characterizations that he was invited to try out for the *Laugh-In*. Johnson became a familiar lurking presence on the show as a German stormtrooper character with the bespectacled face of a fallen cherub peering through a potted plant from beneath his square steel helmet,. His muttered "verrry interrresting" observation was one of a number of catchphrases that became popular on the show. As well as Wolfgang, Johnson also played a dirty old man called Tyrone F. Horneigh (pronounced "horn-eye" to satisfy the censors), who persistently propositioned the hair-netted spinster Gladys Ormphby (played by Ruth Buzzi) on a park bench. She countered Johnson's lecherous overtures by beating him over the head with her outsized handbag.

Johnson was one of the original *Laugh-In* ensemble when the show was launched in 1968, becoming an overnight star alongside Goldie Hawn and Lily Tomlin. With its contemporary, unstructured style, and hosted by the comedians Dan Rowan (the straight man) and Dick Martin, it soon became the top-rated show on American television and Bing made several short appearances on it.

Johnson hosted his own NBC special, "Verry Interesting" in 1971 when one of his guests was Bing, who sang "There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About". Bing also sang "So the Bluebirds and the Blackbirds Got Together" with Arte and Peter Marshall.

Arte (centre) sings "So the Bluebirds" with Bing and Peter Marshall.

Arte's other TV appearances during the 1960s and '70s included "Bewitched," "Lost in Space," "The Partridge Family" and "The Donna Reed Show."

While the bulk of Johnson's roles were on television, his film roles included the Gore Vidal character in Jack Kerouac's *The Subterraneans*, as a federal agent in *The President's Analyst*, as Dracula's comic sidekick in *Love at First Bite.*

Later in his career, he made numerous gameshow appearances on "The Match Game," "Wheel of Fortune" and "The Gong Show," guested on "Murder She Wrote" and "Night Court" as well as on "General Hospital." Johnson also did extensive voice work for cartoons including "Justice League Unlimited," "The 13 Ghosts of Scooby-Doo," "DuckTales" and "Animaniacs," and later narrated numerous audiobooks.

Diahann Carroll, who won Golden Globe and Tony awards and was nominated for an Oscar, passed away on October 4. Carroll, who was 84, starred in the 1960s TV show *Julia*, the first US sitcom to centre on a black woman. She was also the first black woman to win the Tony for best actress in 1962, for the Broadway musical *No Strings*. She went on to be nominated for an Oscar for best actress in 1975 for *Claudine*. In the 1980s, she played the scheming Dominique Deveraux in the TV hit *Dynasty*.

Born Carol Diahann Johnson in Harlem, New York, in 1935, she was modelling by the age of 15 and was reportedly the model for one of the first black Barbie dolls. At the age of 19, she won her first Hollywood role, appearing opposite Dorothy Dandridge in *Carmen Jones*.

She suffered racism both in Hollywood and on stage as a singer. On the big screen, she starred in *Porgy and Bess* alongside Sidney Poitier, Sammy Davis Jr and Dandridge. Other film credits included 1961's *Paris Blues* with Paul Newman, and *Hurry Sundown* in 1967 with Michael Caine and Jane Fonda.

She appeared with Bing on the *Hollywood Palace* on a couple of occasions. The first was on November 20, 1965 when she sang four songs and the second was on September 5, 1967 when as well as a solo she took part in the amusing "Girl Talk" skit with Bing and Joey Heatherton.

With Diahann Carroll and Joey Heatherton.

In the late 60s, Carroll played the title role in *Julia* - a nurse who was a Vietnam widow and single mother - and the role earned her a Golden Globe for best female TV star in 1969.

Diahann was married four times, including Vic Damone (1987-1996), had a tempestuous affair with Sidney Poitier for nine years, and was engaged to the British broadcaster David Frost - which she described as "one of the best things that ever happened to me".

The Way We Were

The section of the magazine where we look at what Bing was doing in years gone by.

100 YEARS AGO

On September 10, 1919, Harry Crosby (aged 16) began his final year at Gonzaga High School. The subjects studied were:

> Religious Instruction - English - Latin (5 hours a week) - Physics - U.S. History and Civics - French - Elocution and Debate

Interesting to note that mathematics was not mentioned.

On December 19, Gonzaga Night (described as an annual "fun fest") took place in the Parish Hall. Bing participated, with other members of the fourth year high school class, in a black-face burlesque on Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. During the holiday period, Bing worked at the local post office.

75 YEARS AGO

September 1, 1944 found the crooner at Warton air base in Lancashire, England. He later visited the base hospital to see three survivors of a recent tragedy at Freckleton where an American bomber had crashed on a school killing thirty-seven children.

> Ruby (May Whittle) recently related that whilst she, George and little David were lying in the American Hospital, Bing Crosby visited Warton to entertain the troops. Bing was told about the three tots and immediately went to see them. Ruby said he sat on her bed and held the tips of her fingers that were sticking out of the bandages. He asked if she would like him to sing him something for her. All she could think of were two songs that her mum always sang: "White Christmas" and "Don't Fence Me In". But Ruby said that the sight of the three tots lying there proved too much for him and Bing could not sing a note. He finally got up and went out into the hall to compose himself. Then he came back and stood in the doorway and sang the two songs which had been requested
>
> (The Day Freckleton Wept, *Flypast* magazine)

Bing continued entertaining US servicemen at various locations in England before flying to France on September 4 with Fred Astaire.

> When we got to France, we saw what organized confusion could really amount to. The Red Ball Express of trucks running a continuous supply of gas to the front lines had right-of-way all over the roads. Bing and I went up in jeeps with our respective groups. . . . We passed through the fantastic ruins of St. Lo, Villone, Le Mans, Etampes.

Knowing what had occurred at these places, I still could hardly believe what I was seeing. Paris was not yet open—the IFF were still sniping in the streets and it was some few days before we could get through to where we could find any place to entertain. I appeared with Cros at a few places and then his unit went off with the Third Army and I went off with the First.

(Fred Astaire, writing in his book, *Steps in Time*, page 272)

For the next 25 days Bing gave numerous shows for the troops in France often working in difficult and dangerous conditions. Gary Giddins describes this incredible undertaking in his book "Swinging on a Star" in a superb chapter which should be required reading for anyone who wants to know about the real Bing Crosby.

Entertaining in France.

He returned to England on September 29 and after giving a show for 7th Photographic Reconnaissance Group at Mount Farm airfield, Oxfordshire, he met up with Fred Astaire again. They travelled to Glasgow where they boarded the liner "Queen Mary" at Greenock for the return trip to the USA.

I ran into Crosby again and we had some laughs relating our experiences. Arriving in London, we were loose for a day or so awaiting the alert to embark for home. I had chosen the boat trip and so did Cros. We were shipped on the Queen Mary and it was loaded, but loaded. The boys were sleeping in the halls, on the stairs, and every place. It was a good trip, with several deviations to avoid submarines.

There were a great many bomber boys on this trip. They were being transferred from the European to the Pacific area mostly, as they told me. Some were just going on long leave. They were dead tired.

Cros and his group and I entertained on the boat a number of times in a special setup in the main dining hall, also in the hospital sections for the many returning wounded.

(Fred Astaire, writing in his book *Steps in Time*, page 278)

Back in the USA, Bing gave a press conference at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel on October 12. He had lost ten pounds during his tour. That night, he made a guest appearance on the *Kraft Music Hall* being cut-in to the Los Angeles broadcast from New York. The next day, he recorded "Evelina" and "The Eagle and Me" with Camarata and his Orchestra in New York. Bing then left New York by train and changed at Chicago on to "The City of San Francisco" streamliner to enable him to go to his Elko ranch where he grew a beard.

Bing arrived back in Hollywood on November 8 and commenced a run on the *Kraft Music Hall* the next day. The Music Maids had been replaced by Charles Henderson and the Kraft Choir. The Charioteers were still regulars on the show while Eugenie Baird had taken over as resident female singer. John Scott Trotter remained as musical director. The Hooper rating for the season was 25.8 which made it the top-rated music show and left it in third place overall. Bob Hope's show topped the Hooper ratings with 34.1. Guests on the Kraft show in the coming weeks included Ethel Smith, Frank Sinatra, Rise Stevens, Spike Jones, Beatrice Kay, Les Paul, Diana Lynn and Jerry Colonna.

Bing also guested on other radio shows including those of Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, and The Andrews Sisters plus appearing on the Philco Radio Hall of Fame and the Elgin Christmas Party broadcasts. He made shows for the Armed Forces Radio Service like Command Performance, Mail Call, GI Journal and Personal Album. In addition, Bing acted as one of the emcees of the NBC Sixth War Loan Drive program "Let's Talk Turkey to Japan".

He had a number of recording sessions in December which produced hits like "Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive" and "Road to Morocco". His song "White Christmas" again entered the charts.

Crosby's disking of 'Christmas' over 2 million.

Hollywood, December 12

Decca Records claims that Irving Berlin's 'White Christmas' as recorded by Bing Crosby is the top record seller of all time with a total of more than two million discs. First waxed in 1942, the tune will sell more than 500,000 records this year.

(*Variety*, December 13, 1944)

Bing filmed scenes for the movie *Duffy's Tavern* and also dubbed three songs which were lip-synched by Eddie Bracken in the film *Out of This World* (released in June 1945) as a parody of Frank Sinatra. Bing's four sons also appeared briefly in the film after Bing extracted a payment of $12,500 for each boy from Paramount to be held in a college trust fund. He sang two songs in the film short *Sing with the Stars* accompanied by Lt. Jimmie Grier conducting the Eleventh Naval District Coast Guard Band.

Bing still found time to play in fund-raising golf matches on December 17, 23 and 27th, and on Christmas Eve, he and his four sons appeared at the

Hollywood Canteen on Cahuenga Boulevard and sang together.

> However, on Christmas Eve, he received a telephone call from Bette Davis who, with John Garfield, founded The Hollywood Canteen in a former Sunset Strip nightclub site. The canteen was a marvelous idea, one of the most effective of all morale builders. Stars would entertain, wash dishes, wait on tables, mingle and dance with military personnel, radical departure from prewar custom when stars led sheltered lives seldom appearing at public functions and rarely glimpsed in person by the masses.
>
> Davis told Crosby a scheduled celebrity had decided he did not wish to sacrifice his Christmas Eve to entertain the troops. The canteen was packed, she said, and the young men and women would be disappointed. Crosby bundled up his four small sons and drove to the canteen where they sang carols and he answered requests for more than two hours.
>
> In her memoirs, Davis recalled how groans changed to bedlam when she batted her enormous eyes and said: "Our scheduled star is unable to appear tonight." And, after a dramatic pause, "but we do have a substitute. Bing Crosby."
>
> (Norman Wolfe, *Troubadour*, page 273)

In New York, the premiere of Bing's film *Here Come the Waves* took place at the Paramount on December 27.

> Interspersed in Crosby's nifty songalogy, Johnny Mercer-Harold Arlen have supplied a set of excellent songs, including a dandy novelty in "Accent-Tchu-ate the POS-itive"; two corking ballads in "Let's Take the Long Way Home" and "I Promise You," the latter as a duet with Betty Hutton playing the alter ego…'Old Black Magic' is reprised in a delicious rib on Frank Sinatra.
>
> Crosby is cast as the new pash crooner, and his mike-clutching stance, accented by the whinnying dames, leaves no secret as to whom Der Bingle refers. It's a dandy take-off on The Voice, but it's not harsh; in fact, it's a sympathetic salve for all out-of-service crooners. . . . [The writers] do as good a job for The Groaner as does Carroll Carroll on the radio.
>
> (*Variety,* December 20, 1944)

On December 28, film exhibitors named Bing as the top box office star of the year for the first of five consecutive years. Elsewhere, the annual public poll by Down Beat magazine had Bing as most popular male singer with 2406 votes. Frank Sinatra was second (1686 votes) and Dick Haymes third (690 votes).

Bing's royalties from record sales in 1944 were $250,000. He received $150,000 per film from Paramount and $5,000 per show from Kraft. During the year, Bing had fifteen records that became chart hits (including four that reached No. 1) and he won the *Photoplay* magazine Gold Medal Award for most popular actor. He continued to win this medal for five successive years.

50 YEARS AGO

Bing was in Scottsdale, Arizona for several days in September 1969 taking advantage of Arizona's early dove hunting season. He went on to Miami where he taped a guest appearance on Jackie Gleason's television show *The Honeymooners in Hollywood* with Gleason and Art Carney which was shown on October 4. Elsewhere Kathryn Crosby flew to St. Louis to star in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* for four weeks.

On September 27, Bing arrived in Los Angeles and the following day he started work on a Hollywood Palace show in the morning and recorded Dean Martin guest exchange tapes in the afternoon. The Dean Martin show was televised on November 6. Kathryn opened in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* at the Sir John Falstaff Theater, St. Louis on September 30. The play ran until October 26. Mary Frances also had a part in the play. Back in Hollywood, Bing finished taping the opening *Hollywood Palace* show of the season with Engelbert Humperdinck, Bobbie Gentry, Gwen Verdon, and Dick Shawn.

Rehearsing with Bobbie Gentry, Gwen Verdon and Dick Shawn.

In October, the groaner taped a *Carol Burnett Show* with Ella Fitzgerald and Rowan and Martin which was shown on November 10. Later in November he recorded a television special titled *Bing and Carol–Together Again for the First Time* with Carol Burnett, Juliet Prowse, and Roy Clark which was shown on NBC on December 18. John Scott Trotter was the musical director.

> At this same time, Nick Vanoff was also producing a television Christmas special for Bing Crosby. Joe Lipman and I were hired as arrangers for the John Scott Trotter orchestra. At our first music meeting, John and Bing told us what songs we each had to arrange and just as we were all about to leave, Bing said, "Wait a minute — I'd like to have a new

arrangement made on 'White Christmas'." I knew Joe heard him, but he kept walking right out the door. As a result, I was trapped. I tried to explain to Bing that his record and existing arrangement of that song was an international treasure and it should not be touched. He shook his head and said it was now too high for his voice. The fact that it could be easily transposed down to whatever key he desired made no difference to him He went on to say that he was tired of that *old* arrangement. I could see I was losing, especially when he asked, "You write all that jingle bells stuff for Como, don't you?" I nodded and he added, "I know you'll write something really pretty for me." He patted me on the back and left the room.

I was very concerned about how to go about fixing something that I felt was *not broken*. Sensing my frustration, Nick Vanoff walked me down to a corner bar and bought me a drink. It was a great therapy. I was so relieved when I learned, a week later, that Bing and his entire staff loved the new arrangement I wrote for "White Christmas."

(Nick Perito, writing in his book "*I Just Happened to Be There*", page 193)

Bing visited the wounded Vietnam veterans at the Army's Letterman General Hospital in the Presidio, San Francisco in December. Around this time, he wrote to his godson Herb Rotchford Jr., then attending the University of Washington.

> It seems to me the government is making noises like they want to get out of Vietnam. I hope they're serious about this, and I know you hope so, too. It would be a great relief, I'm confident. It's a silly war, and it doesn't seem to be getting anywhere. Just costing a lot of lives, and a lot of money. Nobody can give you a valid reason why.

In December, Bing also taped the *Hollywood Palace* anniversary show, with Mary Costa, Sergio Franchi, and Leland Palmer plus the Nick Perito Orchestra, which was shown on January 3, 1970.

On Christmas Eve, the staff's annual celebration took place at the Hillsborough house. Kathryn had recently had her appendix removed and the Grandstaff family rallied round to help with the preparations.

KEEPING TRACK

RICHARD BAKER BRINGS US UP-TO-DATE

At last we have over the last few months seen a slightly increased level of activity, so possibly we should be re-assured that Bing's name still conjures up interest among some. And believe it or not, Country Living magazine, in naming the 20 best Christmas songs ever, includes Bing's renderings of White Christmas at No. 1 and I'll Be Home for Christmas at 2. Oddly I'll Be Home for Christmas is also at 3, as sung by Michael Bublé. A number of other usurpers feature in the list. Usurpers because they cover songs which many readers will forever associate with Bing. Having gone slightly off-piste, to business…

Compact Discs

Bing Crosby Sings Burke and Van Heusen — Sounds of Yesteryear DSOY2147

USA prices seen vary wildly but can be found for around $9. UK around £7.

This disc was mentioned in BING #182 where there is a full listing of titles, but I think it necessary to re-visit it as it was an extremely late entry and precise origins could not be covered. Most of the tracks are said to be the original studio recordings but the details given in the notes are incorrect in several places. 4) "Sunday, Monday, or Always" is stated in the notes to be from a Treasury Star Parade 1945, but it was probably from a 1943 edition. 10) "Welcome to My Dream" is probably from Kraft, April 4, 1946, and is not the commercial recording as listed. Other radio tracks are: 14) "Aren't You Glad You're You?" (possibly GI Journal, May 11, 1945), 15) "Personality" (another from GI Journal May 11, 1945?) 16) "But Beautiful" is from Philco Radio of March 31, 1948. 19) "To See You Is to Love You" from GE of December 18, 1952. Finally, 20) "The Bells of St. Mary's" is a near half hour radio adaptation with Ingrid Bergman and Joan Carroll from August 26, 1946. Inevitably, given the role that the Burke/Van Heusen partnership played in Bing's story, the bulk of the songs featured originated in films from the 1940s. We have several number ones from the hit parade here, and over half the songs gained a place in the top twenty. Whilst most of the studio recordings have been quite easily available in the not too distant past, the radio tracks will make this disc worthwhile to many for them alone. Besides, the rest of the CD is very enjoyable anyway, even if you might get some duplication. Sounds of Yesteryear have now issued several CDs with half hour radio dramatisations: I personally hope for more. Unfortunately the material chosen for their next CD, below, offers no likely candidate.

Immersed in Mr Mercer's Verse — Sounds of Yesteryear DSOY2151

Again USA prices seen vary wildly. Whilst I noted prices around $25, I feel that looks high. UK around £9.50.

1. Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean / 2. I'm an Old Cowhand / 3. Too Marvellous for Words / 4. Bob White (Whatcha Gonna Swing Tonight?) / 5. You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby / 6. On Behalf of the Visiting Firemen / 7. Mister Meadowlark / 8. The Waiter and the Porter and the Upstairs Maid / 9. Dearly Beloved / 10. Blues in the Night / 11. Skylark / 12. On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe / 13. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive / 14. There's a Fella Waiting in Poughkeepsie / 15. The Yodel Blues / 16. The Big Movie Show in the Sky / 17. Autumn Leaves / 18. Lazy Bones (Chesterfield Radio 25 Jan. 1950) / 19. In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening / 20. The Glow Worm (GE Radio 20 Nov. 1952) / 21. P.S. I Love You (GE Radio 18 Oct 1953) / 22. Jeepers Creepers / 23. That Old Black Magic (CBS Radio 14 March 1956).

Pre–issue publicity offered "many songs" from "rare radio transcriptions", so I was quite excited. Well possibly it depends what you might mean by "many" and "rare" because we have four radio tracks and the remaining tracks are the standard commercially issued studio recordings. Three of the radio tracks appear on "Bing Sings the Johnny Mercer Songbook" and the remaining one on "Bing Sings the Great American Songbook" both issued in 2013 by UMG/BCE. So my expectations were somewhat dashed. In addition I think the sound on the earlier issues is better. Inevitably there are other duplications between this issue and the UMB/BCE offering "Bing Sings the Johnny Mercer Songbook" and many of the songs are available on several compilations. Nonetheless the issue as a whole is enjoyable and some might find the odd gap filler.

Al Jolson – The Decca Years 1945-1950 — Sepia 1343

USA around $20. UK around £14.

80 tracks on three CDs of which CD1, tracks 11 & 12 "Alexander's Ragtime Band" / "The Spaniard That Blighted My Life" are of course Al with Bing.

Why am I covering a three CD set with just two songs from Bing on one of them? My justification is firstly Bing's acknowledgement of Jolson's influence, secondly the fact that Bing and Jolson shared a number of outstanding radio shows in which Jolson was something more than a "guest" – he was pretty well a joint star. I think we have to forget the problems over Jolson's blackface appearances and acknowledge the sheer dynamism and verve that he brought to his performances of some of the most popular songs of the time. In December 1932 Al made his last recordings for Brunswick then fell silent. In his notes Christopher Popa relates the way in which Warner Brothers, Decca Records and Columbia films between them revived things. Between August 1945 and July 1950 Al recorded the songs that appear complete on these three CDs. There are also several alternative takes. The collection is immensely enjoyable. The sound quality is very good indeed and Popa's notes very informative, which brings me to my third justification for including the set here. Popa claims that the recordings were mastered to 16 inch acetates up to a session on 16 February 1949, whilst the next session with Al on 17 May 1949 was to full track tape. The last disc cut to acetate was master L4902-4, and the first to tape L5017-4. I do not think that I have ever seen any explicit statement about the timing of tape usage by Decca. If this claim is correct it could imply that Bing's first mastering to tape at Decca was between Master L4921 "Bali Ha'i" and L5048 "Someplace on Anywhere Road". If anyone has any information to supplement or corroborate this I would be pleased to hear it.

Bing at Christmas — Decca Classical

USA $13.98, £10.99 (UK). Also available for download.

1. It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas / 2. Sleigh Ride / 3. Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow! / 4. White Christmas (feat. Pentatonix) / 5. I'll Be Home for Christmas / 6. Jingle Bells (with The Andrew Sisters feat. The Puppini Sisters) / 7. Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas / 8. Do You Hear What I Hear? / 9. The Christmas Song / 10. Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth (with David Bowie) / 11. Twelve Days of Christmas (feat. The Puppini Sisters) / 12. Winter Wonderland 13. The Christmas Song (feat. The Tenors) / 14. White Christmas (Bing solo).

On the very day of the anniversary of Bing's death, 14 October, Decca announced the impending release of this CD on 22 November (on their classical label!). Various artists and the London Symphony Orchestra have been added to what appear to be Bing's original recordings. I have to admit to being ambivalent about such ventures, and would much prefer that the original masterpieces be left alone. However, I acknowledge that such treatments might, just possibly, bring Bing to a wider audience and renew interest in his work. Despite my misgivings I concede that modern recording techniques applied to good orchestral arrangements can add something to the overall "feel" and sound. My fear is that such treatment misrepresents the greater body of Bing's output and those who might be lured into wider investigation might become in some way disappointed. Would Bing have approved? There are now quite a few versions of "White Christmas" that have received various new accompaniments or duettists, but though the process has been going on for some years the original is still the one that invariably gets airtime. For those unfamiliar with the names, Pentatonix is a five person singing group and the Puppini Sisters are a threesome who adopt a style reminiscent of the Andrews Sisters. Snatches of the CD can be sampled on YouTube with comments from both Kathryn and Mary Crosby. I am sure others will have different opinions but from me a cautious welcome purely on the grounds that it might spread knowledge and appreciation of Bing to a younger audience. I hope it is not lost on them.

An extraordinary news item appeared in several British newspapers during September, apparently prompted by a press release from the British Phonographic Industry. They stated that sales of recorded cassettes are at their highest level for more than a decade and that for seven successive years sales have increased. (My comment – numbers are in fact very small but the point is the long period of climbing sales). They add that a number of high profile artists are now issuing their recordings on cassette and that a similar situation pertains in the US "where, according to Nielsen music, sales of cassette tapes grew by 23% in 2018 compared with the previous year". Vinyl – cassette – what next in the retro stakes? Possibly there's hope for the CD in about 2050.

DVDs and BLU-RAY

My thanks to the several correspondents who keep me informed about new issues.

Going My Way 75th Anniversary Edition (Blu-ray) **Shout! Factory Region A/1**

USA about $25

I understand that this issue is fully up to the highest standards in terms of video and audio quality and it includes a number of interesting extras, though when I saw the initial publicity about "vintage shorts" I had hoped that we might get some cleaned up versions of those early 30s Sennett shorts. Not so, but what we do get is "Road to Home" from 1945, with Bing and Bob offering advice to sailors about to be discharged; "All Star Bond Rally" also from 1945 promoting War Bonds; Gary Cooper presenting Bing with his Oscar (it seems that this was filmed after the actual event (early fakery?); Ed Murrow interviewing Bing in 1954; and a short segment said to be all that survives of Bing's TV debut on Philco Playhouse, 18 December 1948. Usually I pass over "extras" on video discs but I think these have real interest. There is also in audio the Screen Guild radio adaptation of "Going My Way". I think this must be from 8 January 1945. In addition there is an audio commentary. Why only region A/1? Bing fans exist in the wider world.

The Bells of St Mary's (Blu-ray) **Arrow Academy**

UK Around £19. Region Region B/2

Due for issue as I write this but not yet seen by me a new region B/2 Blu-ray with a number of extras listed as *"Up to His Neck in Nuns", a visual essay by David Cairns; "Analysing O Malley", an appreciation by chaplain and film academic Revd Dr Steve Nolan; "You Can Change The World", a 30-minute promotional film for "The Christophers". There are also two Screen Guild Theater radio adaptations of "The Bells of St. Mary's" starring Crosby and Bergman, plus an additional radio featurette. The Screen Guild radio adaptations must be those of 26 August 1946 and 6 October 1947, but I have no information on the radio featurette.*

White Christmas (Blu-ray) **Paramount**

US Around $15 Region A/1

A new issue of "White Christmas" in Blu-ray is also imminent but there are already two earlier issues still in circulation. These include an earlier 4-disc diamond anniversary edition (which is listed at the same price), but what differentiates the other earlier issue from the currently promised is unclear.

The Emperor Waltz (Blu-ray) **Rimini Editions**

Region B/2

The French branch of Amazon list this as La Valse de L'empereur and it is to be issued on 19 November at 19.99 Euros in original form plus a version dubbed into French. In my experience all the foreign language versions of discs in such a form are easily set to default into English. (Musicals usually have speech dubbed, songs left as they were). It is an interesting choice for a European Blu-ray issue and I would imagine those colourful "Austrian" scenes filmed in Canada will come over very well. I would think that other arms of Amazon might list it in due time, but as things currently stand I believe there is no problem for UK residents buying from European branches of Amazon. There is a possibility in future of import duties.

The Internet

A number of film scripts from 1930s to 1950s, identifiable by their markings as being Paramount's own file copies, are being offered for sale on eBay. Among the many I noticed, two of Bing's – *Road to Singapore* and *Road to Zanzibar,* at commencement prices of $1,960 each (reduced from $2,450).

Richard Baker *bakerstonb@gmail.com*

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Bing Crosby

June 4, 1976

Dear John:

Glad that you liked the three albums that Red KNorp dropped by the studio for you.

I think they're kind of interesting, and I was delighted to hear the program that resulted from the interview with you when I came to the station. I'm sure it was a big help in stimulating the ticket sale.

About the "Bingo Viejo" album. This was made in Hollywood. Paul Smith, who is probably one of the best piano players around, and who is also Sammy Davis Jr.'s accompanist and director, put the date together. I think it was made in September, 1975.

It was released by British Decca in London - or it's going to be released shortly. Maybe it's not even out yet.

The date was at Coast Recorders in Los Angeles, They also have a studio up here in San Francisco.

I think it's rather an unusual item. Those old standards treated in a little different way. My Spanish is a little stale, but people who speak Spanish well tell me that it's just barely acceptable - which is about all I could hope for!

Thanks for everything -

All best wishes, John,

Bing

Bing Crosby
BC:lm

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